Entertainment / A2-1

'Mutya' a battle of beauties from here and abroad

Across / A16

'Jueteng' funding NPA, says general

Motoring / C1

2005 World Expo: The future of mobility

World / A10

Bolivian president steps down

Sports / A22

NBA Finals: It's Pistons vs Spurs

No Senate hot seats yet for Mike A, Mikey

'WAG PANG TAPUSIN... PARANG TELENOVELA, ANG SARAP ABANGAN!

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PEOPLE may be dying to hear what the President's husband and eldest son have to say about allegations linking them to

NO SENATE/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

US won't object to new leaders in RP–Señeres

By Fe Zamora, Juliet L. Javellana and Philip C. Tubeza

THE US government will not object to a "changing of the guard" in the Philippines provided it is done within the framework of the Constitution, the resigned chair of the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) said yesterday.

US WON'T/ A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Wednesday, June 8, 2005 ★★ 68 pages / 8 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 180 P18
website: www.inq7.net

PNP vows to quell any coup attempt

Estrada lawyer releases 2 tapes

By Norman Bordadora

THE OPPOSITION released yesterday two tapes purporting to reinforce its allegations that President Macapagal-Arroyo attempted to fix last year's presidential vote and dismissed Malacañang claims that a wiretapped phone conversation by the Chief Executive had been tampered with in a fresh attempt to destabilize her administration.

The set of tapes was given to reporters by Alan Paguia, former counsel of deposed President Joseph Estrada, a day after Malacañang released a pair of CDs purportedly containing a hacked conversation between Ms Arroyo and an unidentified man, who media reports said was Elections Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

In the Malacañang tapes, the President was allegedly pressing for a winning margin of one million votes over her rival, the late movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the tapes had been doctored in an opposition bid to undermine the government.

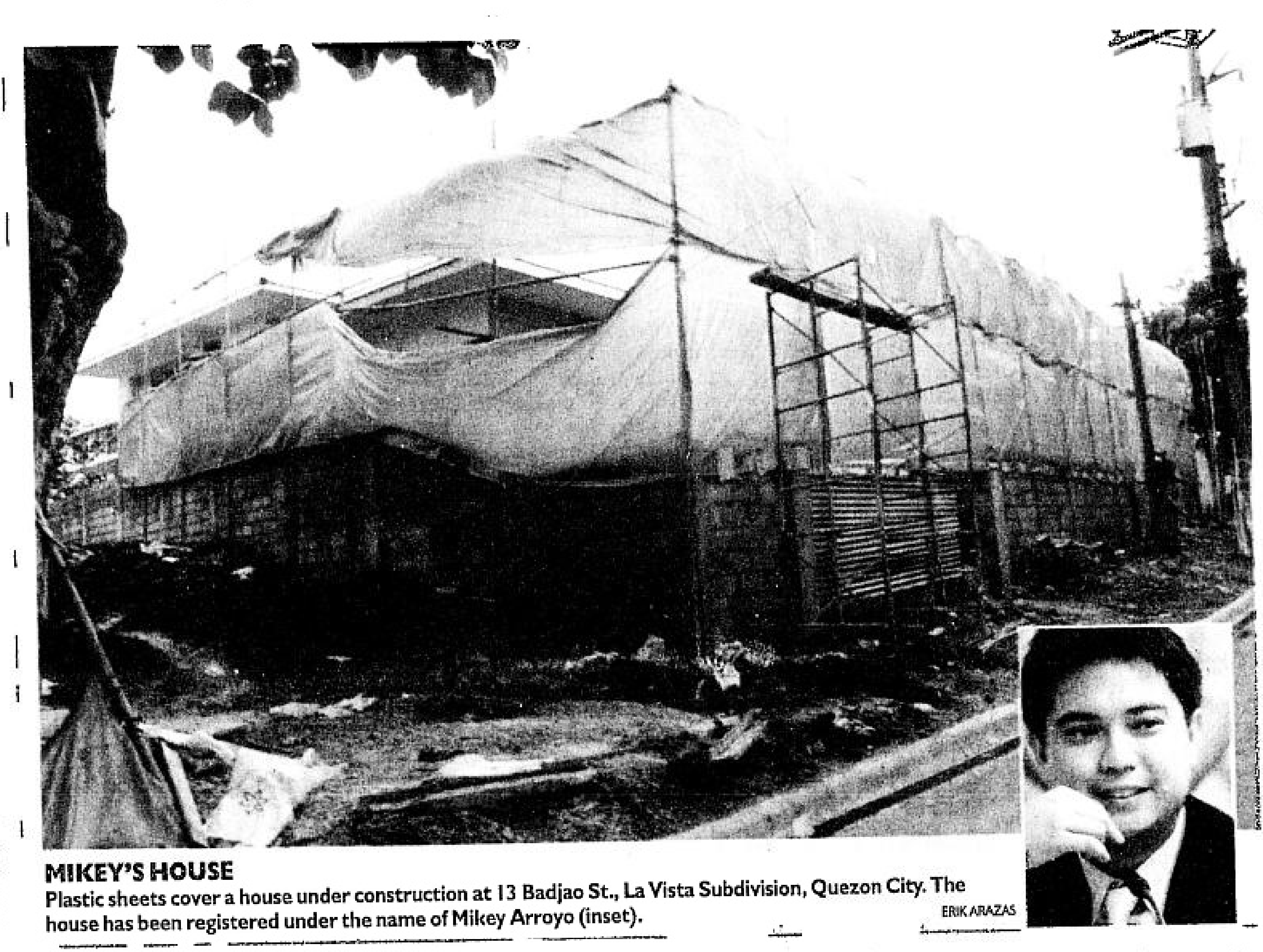
Paguia insisted that his audios were authentic and that Garcillano was the election official speaking with and being pressed by Ms Arroyo to ensure her victory.

Garcillano denied the allegations. "Listen first to the tape. People who are familiar with the way I speak do say it's not my voice. I'm willing to testify if there is a probe to clarify things," Garcillano said.

Paguia said he received the recordings on May 15. He said he believed the voices were those of Ms Arroyo, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, Garcillano and former Sen. Robert Barbers. "It showed how Garcillano allowed himself to be used by those he talked to to cheat in the last elections," Paguia said.

The disks given to the INQUIRER also included Ms Arroyo expressing concern for Barbers' chances and reelectionist Sen. Rodolfo Biazon's alleged threat to have certain ballot boxes in Mindanao

ESTRADA/ A5



MIKEY'S HOUSE

Plastic sheets cover a house under construction at 13 Badjao St., La Vista Subdivision, Quezon City. The house has been registered under the name of Mikey Arroyo (inset). ERIK ARAZAS

PNP goes after cops linked to 'jueteng' lords

By Luige A. del Puerto and Norman Bordadora

THE PHILIPPINE National Police yesterday moved to investigate allegations that police officers acted as protectors of illegal gambling operators and received millions in payoffs, vowing there would be no "whitewash."

Director General Arturo Lomibao met with Director Marcelo Ele of the PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management and other DIDM officials to discuss proceedings against police officers implicated by a confessed "jueteng" bagman, Richard Garcia, during Monday's Senate inquiry into the illegal numbers racket.

Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson, said all the officers named in the Senate would be summoned to the DIDM to give their side.

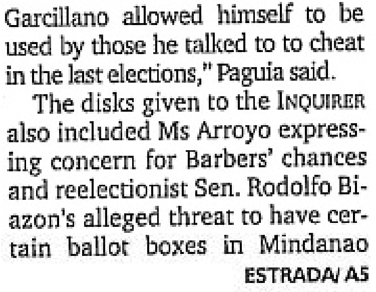
He said police investigators were collating the names of the officers mentioned in the inquiry in preparation for a full-dress investigation.

"There will be no whitewash," said Bataoil. "There will be no sacred cows if evidence is found and they are proven guilty. We will let the ax fall where it should."

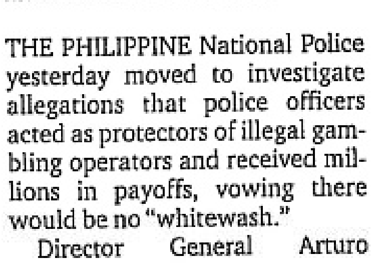
However, the DIDM will not investigate Lomibao, who was linked to the jueteng controversy in an earlier testimony before the Senate.

"We will leave it to higher au-

PNP/ A8



BUCSIT: "Jueteng" protector?



TONETTE OREJAS, PDI CENTRAL LUZON DESK JESS YUSON

GARCIA: Confessed bagman

The stuff bagmen are made of

By Norman Bordadora

FOR ROUGHLY an hour in front of television cameras, 47-year-old former Constable Richard Garcia showed the country what a "jueteng" bagman was made of.

And, in those 60 minutes, Garcia led the nation into the dark underworld of crime where, if reason did not prevail, feuds were settled with a gun.

The picture that emerged of Garcia during his Senate testimony on Monday was not of a mindless courier who packed protection money into duffle bags for distribution to corrupt officials.

Rather, the impression he created, or sought to create, was of a man with enough smarts to negotiate payola amounts with jueteng lords, who included—if one took him at his word—influential people in local government and politics.

To henchmen who refused to toe the line, he gave a sample of his guts.

Once, he said, he pulled a gun on warring gambling operators in Sorsogon to get them to agree on their turf boundaries.

In a meeting with a group of smugglers who had threatened to assassinate him, he said he knocked over a table, outdrew a man named "Bogart" and felled him with a shot. Garcia is still facing charges of frustrated homicide.

"Wherever we'd go, the illegal activities are already in place. I only go in to 'realign' the distribution

THE STUFF/ A8

President meets with senior AFP officers

By Luige A. del Puerto and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

ECHOING an earlier warning by the Armed Forces, the Philippine National Police yesterday said the controversies and scandals rocking the Arroyo administration were but a prelude to a larger scheme to overthrow it.

But PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao said that while "the seat of power is besieged anew by a malicious effort to throw it off-balance by way of a seemingly elaborate and grand design at destabilization," the plot would not succeed.

"The PNP under my leadership will ensure that any further step at destabilization that borders on the illegal and with willful criminal intent shall be addressed accordingly by uncompromising police action consistent with existing laws," he said.

Lomibao said he met with his top men last weekend to assess developments, presumably including the raging "jueteng" scandal in which members of the First Family, ranking PNP men and other government officials had been implicated.

They reached the conclusion, backed by "highly reliable intelligence reports," that certain forces were bent on destroying the Arroyo administration, first by spreading "rumors" and "false information," he said.

"[But] the PNP stands squarely behind the rule of law and will stay focused on [its] mission to protect and serve the people, and uphold the right of the state to protect itself," Lomibao said.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu made a similar declaration three days ago.

On Monday, the military brass said enlisted men were being recruited for the supposed destabilization try. But they said the recruitment had so far been unsuccessful.

As though to confirm rumors of a destabilization plot, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday met with some 25 senior commanders

PNP VOWS/ A6

Lord's Prayer delivers daily bread to hungry students

By Cathy S. Babao
Contributor

> *"... Your will be done on earth,*
> *as it is in heaven*
> *Give us this day our daily bread ..."*

THE LORD'S Prayer comes alive each day for Jesuit priest Bob Hogan.

After taking his morning coffee at the Jesuit House behind the chapel at the Ateneo de Davao University, he strolls over to the back to check on his Daily Bread box. Peeking into the box with great anticipation, the 72-year-old priest, who marks his golden jubilee in the Philippines this year, continues to be amazed at how his heavenly Father has provided daily bread to feed some 120 hungry students at the university.

The Daily Bread program began in November 2002 as an offshoot of a personal experience Hogan had with one of his student assistants. The 20-year-old junior was working in the Theology department as part of a grant-in-aid subsidy from the university.

"It was around 10 a.m. and I asked her if she had taken breakfast. She shook her head sideways and said no. Then I asked her what time she intended to take lunch, and she softly replied '*Hindi na po,* Father. (I won't, Fa-

LORD'S/ A5

FR. BOB Hogan, 72, checks the "Daily Bread" box for God's provisions at the back of the chapel of the Ateneo de Davao University.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Visayas will have occasional rains becoming frequent over the western section. Mindanao will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms. SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/06/08/05

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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Reyes passes big CA hurdle

Defensor set to be confirmed today; Gonzalez bypassed

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER undergoing a grueling nine hearings, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday had his appointment endorsed by the local governments committee of the congressional Commission on Appointments.

Voting unanimously, members of the committee approved a motion by Rep. Eduardo Veloso to endorse Reyes' confirmation to the commission's final plenary today before Congress adjourns Friday.

With the committee endorsement, Reyes' confirmation is all but assured.

Barring any hitches, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor is also expected to be confirmed by the CA plenary today.

It was the shortest hearing for Reyes, who had come under intense grilling on several controversial issues, including his so-called mansion, his withdrawal of support from ousted President Joseph Estrada in 2001 and the alleged disappearances of kidnap suspects, in previous hearings.

A grinning Reyes, who had served as Armed Forces chief, defense secretary and head of an anti-kidnapping task force before becoming interior secretary, said this would serve to inspire him to "work even harder."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who recently came under fire from some legislators for threatening to sue witnesses in the Senate's jueteng inquiry, was bypassed by the CA committee on justice.

Gonzalez appeared for the first time before the CA, eight months after he was appointed to his post and after finally completing the documents that CA members said had been delaying his confirmation.

The committee decided to end the testimony of Marieta Orleans, an Iloilo City councilor, one of those opposing Gonzalez's appointment as the matter was already in the courts.

It also summoned but later excused two other oppositors, Jose Cadiz of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and lawyer Minerva Ambrosio, because their affidavits were not sworn.

"He's effectively bypassed and he needs to be re-appointed by the appointing authority... by the President," said committee chair Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Gonzalez said he did not expect to breeze through, much less be confirmed, his first confirmation hearing.

"I was never sure of that because it's the last day already and I think they have an agreement that you can't be confirmed without at least two hearings... unless there's no opposition," he said.

"I think Secretary Reyes had nine hearings... I don't think it will last that long because all these oppositions against me are all false anyway," Gonzalez said.

Yesterday, two bishops and 13 civilians and environmentalists yesterday appealed to Senate President Franklin Drilon to give them a chance to air their opposition to Defensor's confirmation.

"We were never given a chance to speak. Mr. Defensor, on the other hand, who has never directly experienced the adverse effects of logging and mining, was given a long time to speak without interruption from the commission," they said in a letter to Drilon, who chairs the CA.

Lacson, however, said the chances of the anti-Defensor group speaking at today's CA hearings were nil because Defensor's confirmation had already been referred to the plenary.

"That's a fait accompli. He has already been recommended to the plenary. It's out of the jurisdiction of the committee. And the oppositors can only be heard during committee hearings at the committee level," he said.

They would only be allowed to speak if the body were to return the issue to the environment committee.

The CA approved the submission to the plenary of a report by the environment committee endorsing Defensor's nomination last May 18.

GONZALES: Bypassed JESS YUSON

BIR a 'bright spot' in gov't – SWS

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue is now a "bright spot" in the Arroyo administration, with reforms in tax collection already paying off, BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said yesterday.

Reacting to the Survey of Enterprises on Corruption released last week by the Social Weather Stations, Parayno said he was particularly pleased with the improved public acceptability rating of the BIR and vowed to double efforts to rid the bureau of corrupt men and women.

In past surveys, the BIR had always been viewed as among the corrupt agencies in government.

The latest survey of the SWS, however, showed a steady decline in reports of bribery in connection with the payment of income tax—from 52 percent of those polled in 2000 to only 30 percent in 2005.

Parayno, a former Navy commander and a systems expert, said the improved public perception of the BIR meant there was a consistent decrease in corruption among BIR examiners and collectors.

Last April, the BIR posted a historic revenue collection of P62.9 billion, overshooting the P62.7-billion target for the month by P200 million, and establishing a milestone in its revenue program.

The P62.9-billion tax take for April this year was P9.9 billion more than the P53-billion collection posted in April 2004. As a result, the year-to-date growth rate for this year now stands at 13.6 percent, the highest since 1998.

On the other hand, a report by the BIR's Inspection Service, the bureau's anti-graft and corruption arm, showed that administrative cases had been filed against 363 erring BIR personnel on graft and non-graft cases since 2001.

Parayno said that of the 222 cases decided, 76 employees had been dismissed, 46 suspended, 40 reprimanded, 5 fined and 2 had been forced to resign. Also, 44 employees had been exonerated.

In addition, Parayno said there were 306 cases being heard and awaiting decision, while 14 cases involving dismissal were awaiting confirmation and resolution by the Department of Finance.

Parayno admitted that his bureau might not have been "aggressive" in "advertising" to the public its inroads against corruption.

He said that while surveys like the SWS were based mostly on perception, it was still a good gauge of the success of BIR's anti-corruption efforts.

"We will soon launch a project to provide the public with means to better lodge complaints against BIR officials and employees. We are also enhancing internal audit, as well as improving investigation and prosecution of graft cases," he said.

RP envoy apologizes over 'Nazi' remarks

By Volt Contreras

PHILIPPINE Ambassador to Israel Antonio Modena has apologized to his host government over remarks he made last week comparing the Israeli immigration officials to the "Nazi" secret police in their harsh treatment of Filipinos.

The Jerusalem Post on Monday reported that Modena had issued a formal apology, in which he recognized the "sensitivity" of the terms he used in Israel and among Holocaust victims.

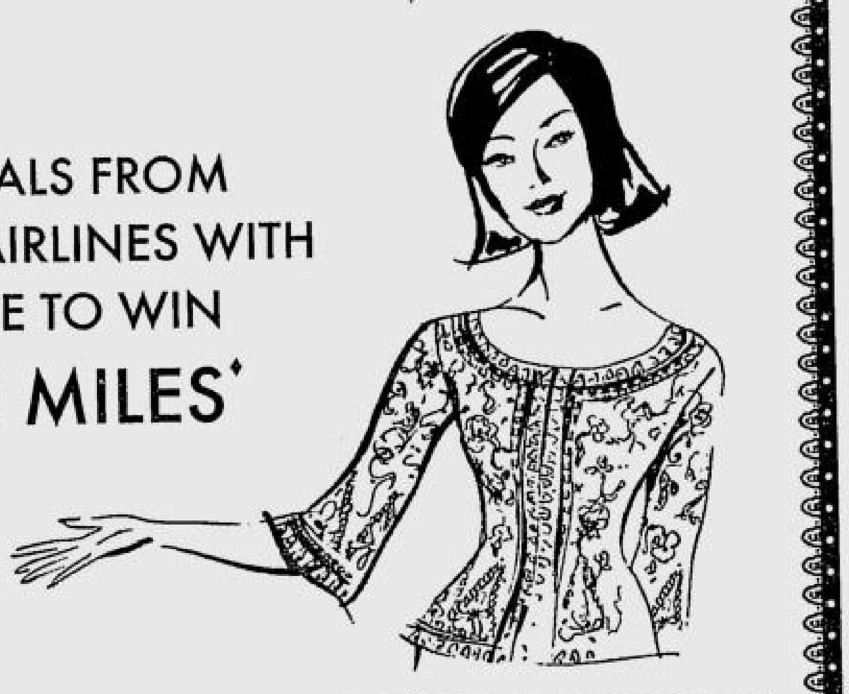
Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo deferred comment on the report yesterday. "He's coming here. In fairness to him, let me talk to him first," he said when pressed in a chance interview.

The Department of Foreign Affairs on Monday announced that Modena was due to come home shortly for "consultations."

"I issued the apology because I recognized the sensitivity on the use of the terms and that the [newspaper interview containing the 'Nazi' remarks] has deflected the attention from the focus I wanted to make," Modena was quoted in the Post as saying.

"I may have gone overboard. I think an apology is the right thing to do," he said, defusing a potential diplomatic row with Israel, where around 30,000 Filipinos work mostly as maids and caregivers.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said it accepted the apology and considered the matter closed. *With AP*



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NEWSBRIEFS

Abu: Pact would get rid of JI

ARMED Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu said yesterday sealing a peace pact with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front was crucial to the government's campaign to get rid of Jemaah Islamiyah operatives in the country. Abu held a press conference with Adm. William Fallon, commander of the US Pacific Command, at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday. "As you all know, the JI threat is an emerging one... although their presence here has been clearly detected," Abu said, when asked about their assessment of the JI threat. "We are relating this to the peace agreement that we would like to sign with the MILF. We believe that if we deprive them [JI] of areas of operation, it will be difficult for them to establish a foothold in the Philippines," Abu said. Abu and Fallon reviewed the Mutual Defense Treaty's five-year plan and agreed on the joint exercises to be held this year. Among these are Baker Piston 05-2 narcoterrorism training in Baguio City in July and the CARAT 05 maritime training operations in Subic and the Palawan Sea in August. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

No contract with Takenaka

THE GOVERNMENT has not yet signed an agreement with the Japanese contractor that built the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3, which would allow for the turnover of the operational plans and design of the facility, the Manila International Airport Authority said yesterday. Last week, the Department of Transportation and Communication said Japanese contractor Takenaka Corp. had signed the final terms of the contract to finish the project. Miaa general manager Alfonso Cusi said the Miaa has been working on the other requirements essential to the operation of Naia 3, such as the communication and utility connections. He said the P200-million access road would be finished this month. "The only thing that we really can't work on is the building itself because Takenaka still has not turned over the plans," he said. Still, Cusi said, the government hopes to open Naia 3 by year-end after the original June 21 opening date was postponed. *Nikko Dizon*

OFWs get free guide books

SOME 200 overseas Filipino workers who left yesterday for their jobs abroad received two free books each in celebration of Migrant Workers Day. Businessman Francisco Colayco's "Pasaporte: Kalayaan sa Kakapusan" and Press Undersecretary Susan "Toots" Ople's "Paalis Ka Na Pala," a guide for first-time OFWs, were launched at the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration lounge at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. The event was attended by OWWA Administrator Marianito Roque, OWWA land-based sector representative Corazon Carsola and Manila International Airport Authority public affairs office head Judith Dolot. Roque said Colayco's book was part of OWWA's Reintegration Program for OFWs, while Ople's book was a practical guide on everything a first-time OFW needs to know before leaving his homeland. *Nikko Dizon*

Indians without papers

THREE Indian nationals were arrested by sea marshals on the SuperFerry 12 the other day after the foreigners were found to have no passports or ID cards. The Indians were identified as Manmon Sindhu, Sonoj Sindhu and Rajbir Singh. A Philippine Coast Guard report said the men caught the attention of sea marshals on Monday just before the ship left Cebu City for Manila. The marshals found no prohibited items in their bags, but the Indians failed to show any passports or IDs. They also spoke no English or Filipino. The three were turned over to the Bureau of Immigration. *Leila B. Salaverria*

'RP not a drugs exporter'

THE PHILIPPINES is not an exporter of marijuana or a transit point for the shipment of two other illegal drugs, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency said yesterday. The PDEA was reacting to news reports quoting two US agencies—the Central Intelligence Agency and the Bureau of International Narcotics Law and Enforcement Affairs—as saying that the Philippines exported marijuana and hashish and was a transit point for the shipment of heroin and methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu. Undersecretary Anselmo Avenido Jr. said the reports had not been validated by the PDEA. He admitted, however, there had been marijuana seizures in small volumes intended mostly for Filipinos living abroad. The PDEA chief said that while shabu laboratories discovered last year could produce large quantities of the drug, this did not mean syndicates were exporting dangerous drugs to other countries. *Luige A. del Puerto*

DPWH usec's wealth

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to forfeit in favor of the government all illegally acquired and unexplained wealth of Public works Undersecretary Salvador Pleyto worth at least P37.8 million. In a 35-page petition, the Ombudsman also asked the anti-graft court to include real properties under the name of Pleyto's wife Miguela and their children Salvador Jr., Mary Grace and Russell. The Ombudsman said aside from the discrepancies noted in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net worth, examination of all available loan documents showed that most of the supposed liabilities reflected in Pleyto's SALN were unsubstantiated by evidence. The forfeiture petition covers several real estate properties amounting to at least P37.8 million in barangays Poblacion, Pulong Buhangin, Caycombo, and Catmon, all in Sta. Maria, Bulacan. "The respondents were given every opportunity to explain their loan balances but they have not substantiated their claims with documentary evidence.' *Nelson F. Flores*

No book shortage, just distribution problems, says DepEd

By Alcuin Papa

THERE are enough books for public schools around the country.

Education Undersecretary for Administration and Finance Juan Miguel Luz told reporters yesterday the problem of textbooks was now more of distribution rather than quantity.

"We don't actually have a shortage of textbooks. We have a problem with the distribution," Luz said.

He said most of the textbooks purchased by the Department of Education (DepEd) were in the storage rather than being used in schools. "Many of our textbooks are being put up in storage. Our program for the last year-and-a-half was to exchange textbooks between public schools so that the textbooks in the storage will be released and used by schools that need them."

According to education officials, computing the number of students with the number of textbooks the DepEd has bought in the last five years, which is the standard life span of a textbook title, the actual ratio is already 1:1 in almost every subject except Mathematics.

For this school year, the DepEd has purchased 104.5 million textbooks and 2.6 million manuals for teachers to be distributed to all public schools nationwide. This will benefit a total of 16.8 million students.

The DepEd had earlier said 1.3 million more textbooks and Lesson Guides in Math will be delivered from July to October this year. Supplementary Reading Materials (SRMs), meanwhile, are up for bidding, the Deped said.

Luz explained that because of the National Book Development Law put in place in the mid-90s, the DepEd was forced to buy different books for different subjects for different levels every year. This resulted in the proliferation of textbooks and confusion in schools as to which textbook to use. Once a school chooses one textbook, the rest are merely stored.

No reason to panic over malaria –DOH

By Leila B. Salaverria

DESPITE the headlines, there is no reason for the public to panic over malaria because incidents of the disease have not reached epidemic proportions.

In fact, the incidence of malaria in provinces where the disease-carrying mosquito are present has declined in the last five years, said Dr. Dorina Bustos, a medical specialist at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine.

"There are malaria outbreaks but no epidemics. The incidents have not reached five times the normal amount, and we have reduced the number of provinces where there are cases," Bustos said yesterday at the Bulong Pulungan forum at the Westin Philippine Plaza hotel.

Bustos said malaria is a "curable and preventable" disease.

Moreover, residents of Metro Manila and other urban areas need not worry too much because the malaria mosquito does not breed in polluted waters.

Unlike the dengue-carrying mosquito, the malaria mosquito also does not breed in clear standing water.

"That mosquito breeds in free-flowing mountain streams and river tributaries, which is why malaria is reported only in the rural areas," Bustos said.

She said the mosquito bites only in the evening and the peak "biting hours" are between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. Only the female mosquito bites

Not in resorts, Puerto.

Malaria was prominently in the news recently after broadcaster Reyster Langit and his cameraman, Arnold Tañare, died of cerebral malaria which they contracted in Palawan.

Palawan has the most number of malaria incidents among provinces, followed by Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Apayao and Quirino, according to Bustos.

But she said the popular high-end resorts in Palawan like El Nido and Club Noah had no recorded malaria incidents.

In Puerto Princesa, she said malaria incidents were recorded eight kilometers beyond the city proper.

Bustos said the public could take measures to prevent contracting malaria.

Aside from undergoing prophylaxis before, during and after going to provinces with malaria, she said people should wear long-sleeved clothing and slather insect repellent on their skin.

They should also use mosquito coils and nets when sleeping, she said.

Curable

The RITM specialist said malaria could be cured, especially if detected in its early stages. Malaria symptoms include headaches and fever, similar to the flu.

Rizal provincial health officer Iluminado Victoria said yesterday the number of malaria cases in the province was "not at an alarming level" contrary to reports.

Victoria said the province had stepped up its drive against the disease after the death of Langit.

He said 196 confirmed malaria cases had been reported in Rizal this year. But all the victims, most of whom lived in mountain communities, have recovered, he said. *With Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

New Health chief asked to go after 'drug lords'

By Christian V. Esguerra

BARELY a week into his new post, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III is faced with an enormous foe: The "drug lords" of the country's P92-million pharmaceutical industry.

Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD), a cause-oriented group composed of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, has urged Duque to work to dismantle the so-called pharmaceutical industry cartel, which purportedly keeps the prices of local medicines high.

"We must put an end to the monopoly pricing being dictated by transnational and multinational corporations that virtually control and run the drug industry in this country," said Dr. Gene Alzona Nisperos, HEAD secretary general.

"These pharmaceutical companies are literally drug lords, no different from the jueteng lords that bleed our people dry of their last centavo," he said.

Nisperos noted that about 95 percent of the local pharmaceutical industry was controlled by transnational and multinational companies.

Highest in the world

Zuellig, for instance, controls 80 percent of drug distribution while its sister company, Interphil, accounts for 75 percent of manufacturing, Nisperos said.

Mercury Drug, the country's leading drugstore chain, controls about 75 percent of retailing, he said.

With this setup, Nisperos said "it is no wonder that prices of medicine in the country rank among the highest in the world."

The drug Felodepine, for instance, is sold locally as the antihypertensive "Pendil" by Astra-Zeneca for P65, according to HEAD.

But the same company reportedly sells the same medicine for only P36 in Thailand and P10 in India.

Nisperos said pharmaceutical companies had been getting away with the high prices because the government had always resorted to "stop-gap measures instead of long-term solutions."

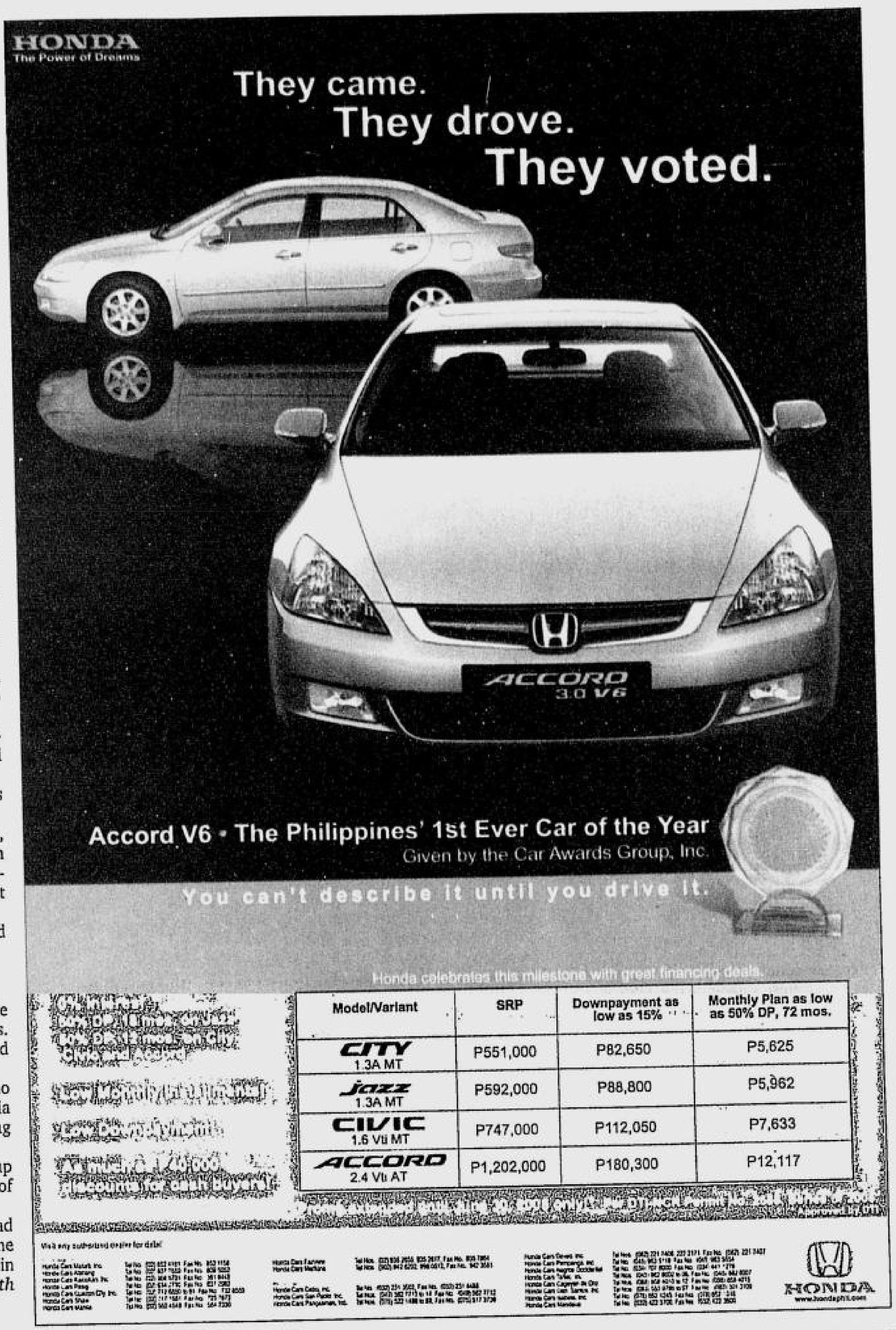
The Generics Law and the National Drug Policy which were meant to provide cheaper drugs in the market are hardly implemented by "inept or corrupt bureaucrats" owing to intense lobbying by the transnational companies, he said.

Token importation

The government's parallel importation of drugs to meet the growing demand for cheaper medicines is not a good solution as well, Nisperos said.

He described as "token" the Arroyo administration's allocation of only P500 million for the parallel imports.

"Parallel importation," he said, "only reveals the schizophrenic policy of the Arroyo government as far as the drug industry is concerned. This is the kind of policy that has wrought havoc on the Philippine health care system, which has worsened because of Arroyo's insistence on globalization and neoliberalization."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No Senate hot seats yet for Mike A, Mikey

From page A1

"jueteng," but senators are not all that eager to put them in the hot seat—not for now, anyway.

"Not yet. I don't think so until and unless a witness or witnesses will testify as to the direct connection or direct link of any member of the First Family," opposition Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson said.

"I don't think it is advisable or proper to invite those alluded to as recipients of payola, because so far [there is] no [hard evidence against the First Family]," Lacson added.

Accusations are serious

Sen. Manuel Villar, co-chair of the Senate inquiry into the illegal numbers game, said more witnesses were expected to testify and he had no plans to stop the hearings despite Malacañang's complaint that the inquiry was being used as a forum to destabilize the Arroyo administration.

Villar said the accusations against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo were serious but the inquiry panel still did not have enough information to make a judgment.

"It's too early, that's why I want to hear some more witnesses and resource persons because these are serious accusations," Villar said.

"Of course, we don't want to be used [by destabilizers], but there is a gray area here," Villar said.

Too early to stop

Confessed bagman Richard Garcia had insinuated that the Arroyos were jueteng protectors, while another informer, Wilfredo Mayor, said he gave a P600,000 monthly payola to a friend of Representative Arroyo and that the money was supposedly intended for the congressman.

Both witnesses gave no concrete evidence to support their allegations.

Garcia also alleged that Mikey Arroyo was known as the "Lion King" because of his supposed clout with the police.

Mikey called Garcia "the Liar King."

"It's too early for the committee to make a report. I don't think I can make a report on the basis of two hearings," Villar said.

"At a certain point, if we have enough [information] already, we can stop but I'm just saying it's too early to say stop now," he added.

Staying away from Cruz

Lacson said: "This should not be stopped because there are so many questions that need to be answered."

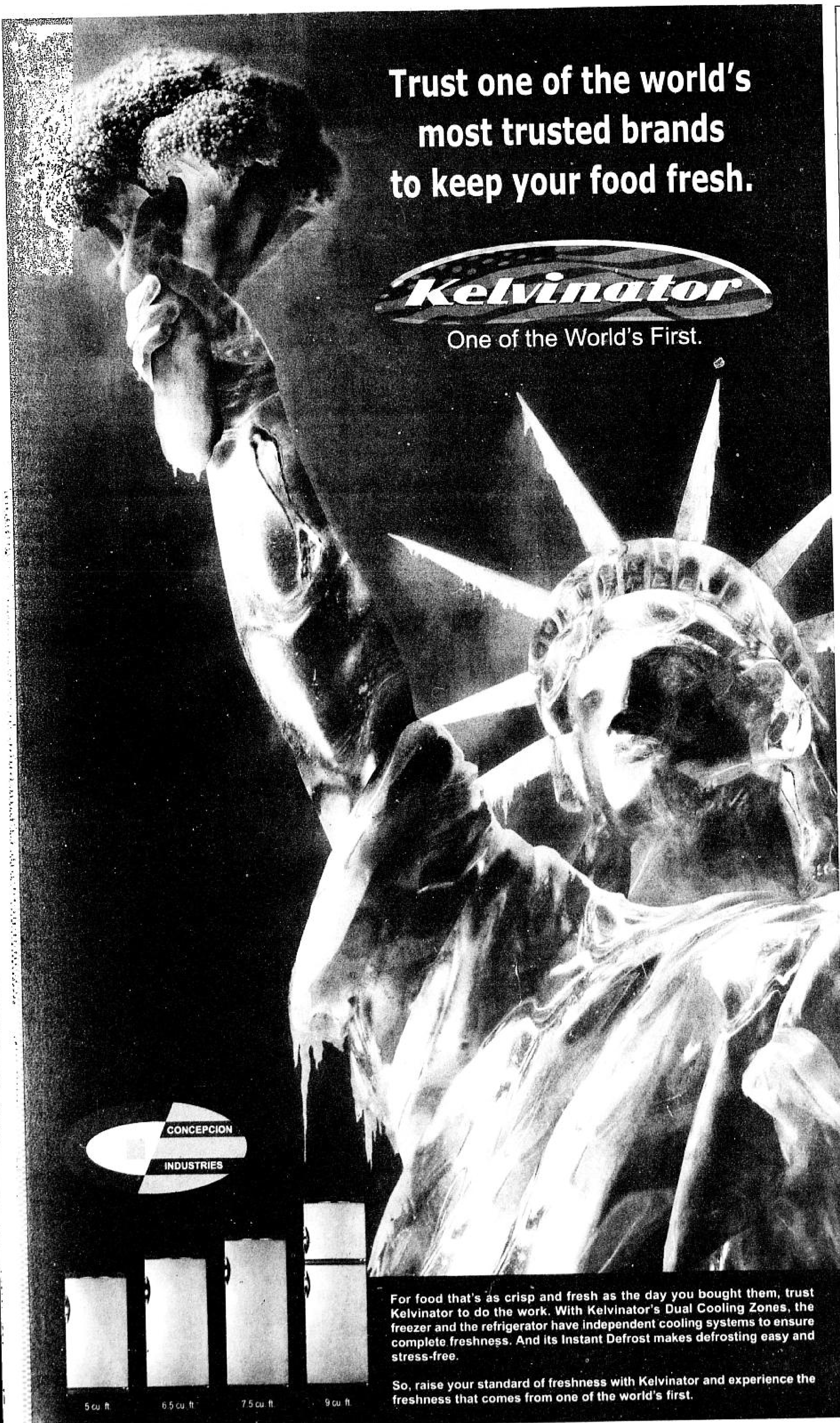
He also said the investigation could not be stopped because the two committees conducting the inquiry had already agreed to hold daily hearings starting Thursday this week.

Villar said he did not know if all the eight witnesses who Archbishop Oscar Cruz said were ready to testify would be presented.

"I don't want to talk to Archbishop Cruz. It would be healthy for both of us not to talk to one another. I don't want people thinking that we're talking to each other," Villar said.

The committees have not released their witness list for Thursday but committee staffers said four witnesses of the bishop, alleged Mikey Arroyo bagman Arturo Naguit and his friend Rene Maglanque, and Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez, an alleged jueteng lord, were among those to be invited.

FIRST Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo



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Corrections

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the front-page banner story—"'Jueteng': Father-son affair"—misstated that Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo represents Negros Oriental. The brother of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo represents the fifth district of Negros Occidental.

* * *

IN SOME copies of yesterday's issue, the front-page banner story also misstated the name of Archbishop Oscar Cruz's "jueteng" whistle-blower. The correct name of the witness is Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor—not Pineda.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses: glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent, pending the appointment of a new readers' advocate, to Isagani Yambot, publisher, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address: iyambot@inquirer.com.ph.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, June 8, 2005
10th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: 2 Cor 3:4-11
Gospel: Matthew 5:17-19

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not think that I have come to remove the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to remove but to fulfill them. I tell you this: as long as heaven and earth last, not the smallest letter or stroke of the Law will change until all is fulfilled.

"So then, whoever breaks the least important of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be the least in the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, whoever obeys them and teaches others to do the same will be great in the kingdom of heaven."

Commentary

Jesus is both prophet and teacher and builds on the foundation of all that has been revealed by his Father before him, fulfilling and fleshing out the laws so that they sing with spirit and depth. We must honor the law, obey it and extend it—first beyond the borders of our family and kin out towards all peoples and situations and we must then—deepen our understanding of what it calls us to do, not limiting it to 'just this' or 'only that' and the bare bones of what is the lowest common denominator. We must teach by respect of the law and what it intends to do: bind a community together that reveals in their lives the presence of God among us, that covenants us to the Holy One and witnesses to all others the goodness and justice of our God that we profess to believe in. We must learn to love the practice of obedience and call one another to it.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (REVISED PENAL CODE: BOOK ONE)—Unlawful aggression—In incomplete self-defense, unlawful aggression must be present, it being an indispensable requisite. What is absent is either one or both of the last requisites, to wit: reasonable necessity of the means employed to prevent or repel it; and, lack of sufficient provocation on the part of the person defending himself. Just as in complete self-defense, the burden of proof is upon petitioner to prove the elements of incomplete self-defense. It follows that he should have proved before the trial court that there was unlawful aggression on the part of the victim. (Citations omitted.) (Justice Sandoval-Gutierrez, Third Division, Mendoza v. People, G. R. No. 139759, January 14, 2005)

BY R.B. VERA

Estrada lawyer releases 2 tapes

From page A1

opened if he was cheated.

"Biazon is threatening to have the ballot boxes in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi opened if he's cheated. *Baka daw ako mayari doon* (I might get beaten in those areas if that happens)," the supposed President's voice is heard on the tape.

Biazon and Barbers went neck and neck in the vote count with Biazon eventually getting the upper hand.

First Gentleman

Paguia's audios also contained voices supposedly of Barbers asking Garcillano about alleged vote-padding in exchange for P5 million. There was also the alleged voice of the First Gentleman asking Garcillano to help Barbers win over Biazon.

Meanwhile, initial technical analysis of the Palace tapes conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation showed the male voices belonged to two different persons, NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said. He said the same female voice was on the two tapes.

"There is a possibility that both CDs are tampered because it is obvious that they are both edited, as shown by the voice-over between conversations," Wycoco said.

He said he wanted to get the original copy of the telephone conversations. He added that the NBI would hire civilian experts or request the US Federal Bureau of Investigation to help in the investigation.

As controversy swirled over the tapes, Ms Arroyo ordered the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to determine if cell phone providers had enough safeguards.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday told reporters that Ms Arroyo had directed Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza to instruct the NTC to meet with the phone companies. He said the wiretapping of the President was a flagrant violation of privacy that "behooves upon the authorities to do something about it."

Government concerns

An industry source said the country's telecommunication players led by Smart Communication and Globe Telecoms had been summoned by the NTC to a closed-door meeting today to discuss government concerns about security of mobile phone communications.

Smart and Globe said they would cooperate with the NTC investigation but withheld comment pending more details on the alleged wiretapping incident, such as the type of phone used by the President and whether the other party was using a land line or cell phone. *With reports from Jerome Aning, Christine O. Avendaño, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Margaux C. Ortiz*

INQ7.net is making available what Malacañang has said are wiretapped conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and a certain "Gary."

The Palace has said that the recordings were digitally manipulated to make it appear that Arroyo had rigged the 2004 elections. The Palace has denounced the tapes as part of a destabilization plot.

Audio files of what the Palace says are the original and the altered recordings can be downloaded at www.inq7.net/tape. The files are in MP3 format.

Lord's Prayer delivers daily bread to hungry students

From page A1

ther).' Upon hearing this, my curiosity grew and I was quite shocked to find out that on most days, she only had one meal, and that was dinner!" Hogan recalls.

Later, he found out that many students were in the same predicament.

Another Jesuit priest, Rodolfo Malasmas, was very moved when one afternoon, he overheard one scholar telling another: "Thank God, at least we have something to eat for lunch today."

The two Jesuits were shocked that such an injustice was taking place right under their noses. Thus, the Daily Bread program, administered by the Theology Department which Hogan chairs, was born.

God provides

From seed money of P10,000 in 2002 which helped provide a meal a day six times a week for 20 students, the fund has grown to P60,000 a month. But the number of students needing assistance has risen, too. Hogan now has a roster of 120 students whose second meal of the day depends on the kindness of the school, strangers and those who believe in the cause.

Hogan explains that Ateneo has many scholars, but their funding does not cover meals. "They are given tuition subsidy, but there are still the books, miscellaneous expenses, transportation and boarding costs that they or their already overburdened parents have to bear."

Thus, nutrition is often the item sacrificed, to the detriment of their health. Hogan recalls how one of the scholars on the Daily Bread program, who was a candidate for honors, was bordering on blindness due to malnutrition.

Donations from alumni

An alumna, upon hearing Hogan's homily on the Daily Bread program, came up to him in tears after the Mass. The young woman was a scholar at the AdDU and had graduated summa cum laude.

"She said my sermon reminded her of her days back in school. 'Father, she said, I lived on one meal a day for four years at the Ateneo,'" Hogan narrates.

Funding each month depends on a fixed amount of P5,000 from the school, the daily collection from the "bread box," donations from various kind-hearted souls, and collections from Friday's 5 p.m. Mass at the chapel, which Hogan officiates.

On Sundays, Hogan says Mass at two subdivisions in Davao City—Liceralde and Diamond Village—and whatever he is given goes directly to the Daily Bread fund.

Recently, the silver jubilarian class of 2004 donated P100,000 to help set up the Daily Bread Foundation fund. Hogan's target is to hit P1 million, which is the requirement to set up a foundation, and to eventually have the school institutionalize it.

"I want it to live on long after I'm gone," he pauses and adds, "And that may not be too far off," he chuckles.

Theology come alive

Hogan first came to the Philippines in 1955. His first assignment was at the Ateneo de Manila University in the early '60s. He moved to the Ateneo de Naga where he stayed from 1967 to 1982, and finally to Davao which has been his home for the last 23 years.

"Running the Daily Bread program is really theology coming alive for me," he says. "I try to make the screening process for the kids as simple as possible. The most important question I ask them is, 'Are you hungry?'"

Many of the students are very reticent, very shy when they first come. "Later, they realize that there are others like them and they begin to form a community," Hogan says.

Thus, the Daily Bread has become twofold: It provides basic sustenance to feed the body and gives psycho-spiritual support so students are able to address their pain.

The students come from all faiths—Catholic, Muslim and *lumad*—and there is no discrimination. "Our humanity is not based on our religion, and that should be the basis of all our relationships," Hogan says. "When this happens, all our differences disappear. That is the light in the darkness."

Hogan cites the worldwide tsunami effort that came about after the unspeakable tragedy that hit the world and he calls it a circle of love. "To bring Christ to other people's lives in brotherhood and reconciliation regardless of race, color or faith—that to me is theology coming alive each day."

Sharing a meal

Every month, students who are part of the Daily Bread roster receive stubs that entitle them to six meals per week. Each stub has a value of P25. At the university cafeteria, six to seven concessionaires have signs on their booths that say, "Daily Bread accepted here."

Hogan says this makes it easy for the students to discreetly hand over their stubs in exchange for a meal. But even in Davao, P25 does not go very far, considering the physical and mental needs of a college student.

At the AdDU, the amount is enough to buy a cup of rice and one viand, or a cheeseburger (P21), a plate of *pansit malabon* (rice noodles, P25) or a bowl of *mami* (noodle soup, P21).

Hogan would like to increase the amount to at least P30 per meal so that there is room for a little extra; perhaps enough to sustain them through their afternoon classes and the long ride home. "I'm dependent on God's provisions and so far He hasn't failed me yet," he says.

Joy in the box

We accompanied him that morning as he checked God's provisions for him that day in his Daily Bread box at the chapel. Hogan says that each time he accepts students into the program, he reminds them that being part of the program is really a gift from God.

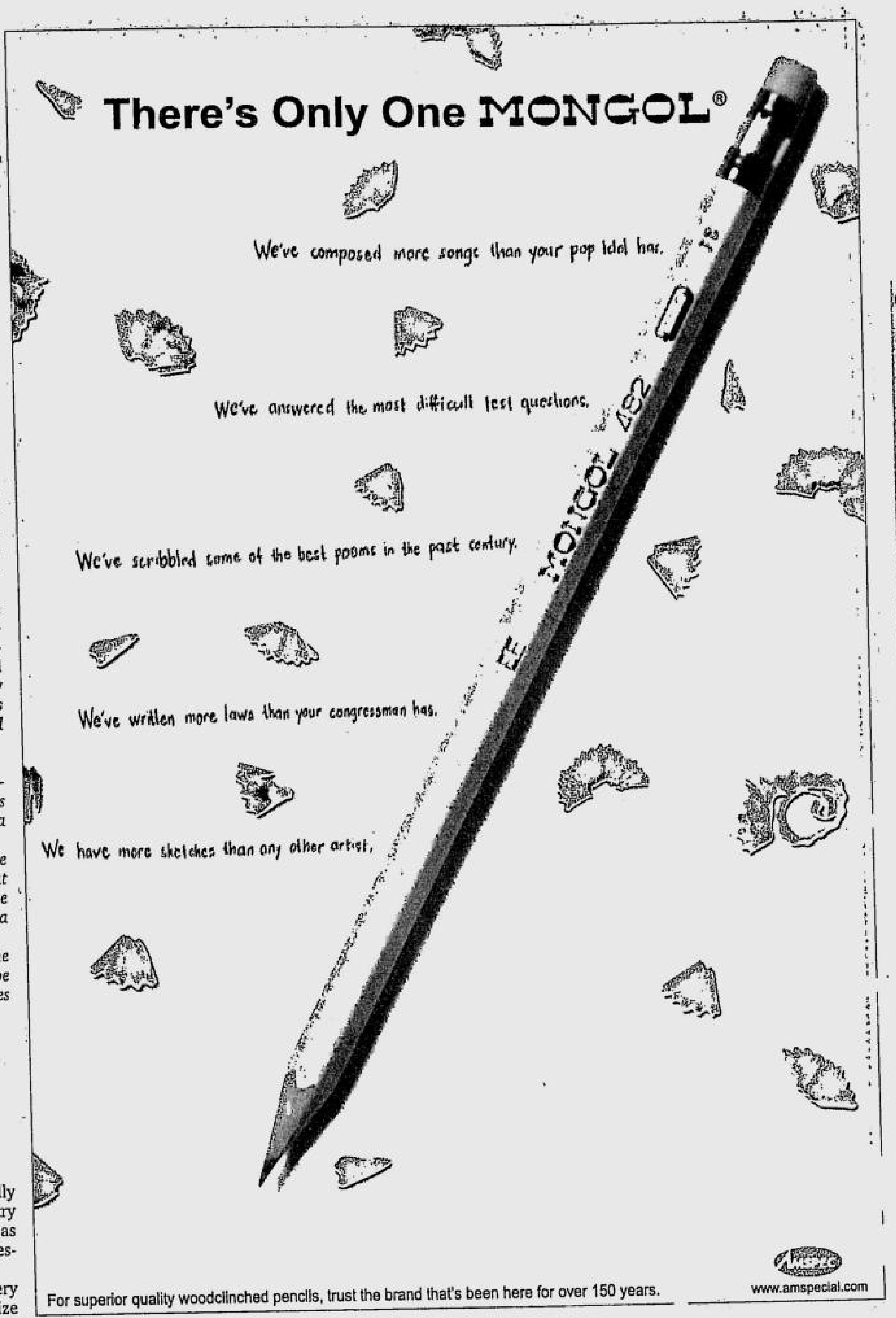
"This is concrete manifestation of how He really cares for you," he tells them.

Above the small box is a sign made by one of the students in the program. It is a passage from the book of Matthew and it reads: "When I was hungry, you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty, you gave me to drink. Now enter into the joy of my Father."

Gently removing the tiny lock, Hogan's eyes fill with gratitude as he sees the box filled with "daily bread." He shuts the box and then closes his eyes to bless the people who had generously shared of their gifts.

Once more, the Lord's Prayer comes alive.

If you wish to help build the Daily Bread Foundation, please call Fr. Bob Hogan at (082) 221-2411 local 8716 (Jesuit House) 8325 (Department of Theology) or e-mail bhogan@addu.edu.ph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Davide calls for sobriety amid destabilization talk

By Armand N. Nocum

CHIEF Justice Hilario Davide Jr. yesterday called for sobriety amid the "jueteng" scandal and persistent talk of destabilization, saying all Filipinos would suffer should there be another coup attempt or change in government.

But Davide, who presided over the impeachment court that tried then President Joseph Estrada before the latter's ouster in 2001, was mum about the possibility that he might soon reprise that role.

"What do you think?" he said in reply to a reporter who asked whether he was ready to once more preside over such a court.

The Chief Justice, who is scheduled to retire on Dec. 19, spoke with reporters during an "appreciation luncheon" with the media in celebration of the 104th anniversary of the Supreme Court.

"It's the duty of every one of us to keep the country stable, and so my point is that as good citizens, we should see to it that we should remain as calm as possible and promote the stability of the government," he said, adding:

"Everyone will be affected by any destabilization [plot]."

Davide said it would serve the public interest for every one to exercise "sobriety and fairness."

Told that many were viewing him as the only acceptable interim leader should President Macapagal-Arroyo be removed from office before the end of her term, he said he was more interested in serving out his own term.

"Thank you for that opinion," he said. "I am the Chief Justice. This is my valedictory year. I will serve the court the best way I can because this is the third organ of the government, whose role in the development of the country in promoting stability and the rule of law and preserving democracy is very vital and crucial."

He also said it was important that in these uncertain times, the Supreme Court would see to it that "the concept of justice, the demands of justice, will be properly observed by everybody."

Davide declined to comment on the "merits or demerits" of the jueteng scandal in which members of the First Family and other government officials had been implicated, saying it would be "prejudgment" on his part if he did so.

He said this should be the tack that the justices should take.

PNP vows to quell any coup attempt

From page A1

of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Classes 1973 to 1977 of the Philippine Military Academy were reportedly asked to send five representatives each to the meeting in Malacañang.

"Could be a loyalty check," a member of PMA Class '77 told the INQUIRER.

But Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., of Class '74, downplayed the importance of the meeting, saying in a phone interview that it was just "one of those meetings."

At Camp Aguinaldo, Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP public information chief, said three retired officials—Maj. Gen. Fortunato Abat, Comm. Ismael Aparri and Brig. Gen. Angel Sadang—were among those being watched in connection with the supposed destabilization plot.

"We're cautious of their statements; their activities are being monitored," Pascual told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo.

But he admitted that there was no evidence to directly link the three men to the supposed fresh recruitment efforts among soldiers.

The three retired officers have publicly criticized Ms Arroyo's administration for corruption.

Abat, a former defense secretary and Army chief, has called for the President's ouster and the formation of a military-civilian junta as a transition government. He leads the Federation of Retired Commissioned and Enlisted Soldiers (or Forces).

Aparri is the spokesperson of another group, the Young Enlisted Soldiers with Active and Retired Military for Solidarity (or Yes Arms).

Sadang represents the group Generals for the Constitution.

Destabilizing itself

Pascual said the three men were "exploiting" current controversies against the AFP leadership, such as General Abu's multimillion-peso sidewalk renovation project in Camp Aguinaldo and the 60-room military beach resort in Boracay.

But Abat and Aparri denied recruiting soldiers for a mutiny.

"We are not destabilizing; it's the government that's destabilizing itself," Abat said. "We are calling for her (Ms Arroyo's) ouster because she is destabilizing the government through malgovernance."

Aparri said he was only giving voice to the sentiments of junior officers and enlisted men.

"I am the one being recruited, agitated, by the soldiers to speak for them. They are the ones asking me to speak for them because they are voiceless. I've never recruited anyone," Aparri said when interviewed at the office of the Association of Generals and Flag Officers in Camp Aguinaldo.

"Is it wrong to speak for the unattended?" he said. "But in this country, when you speak against the government, you are a destabilizer. They can call me anything, but we are not destabilizing the government."

Pascual declared that soldiers would not be recruited to rebel against the administration again.

"We have a very stable command structure. The chain of command is intact," he said.

The AFP usually downplays reports of destabilization plots. But on Sunday, Abu uncharacteristically came out with a statement saying such a plot was afoot.

Issues

Lomibao said the PNP would not be "swayed by any motive" and would "remain faithful to the Constitution."

But he did not specify the "deliberate disinformation efforts, sensationalized scandals and unfounded rumors" that he had cited.

Before Lomibao warned of the supposed destabilization plot, the biggest issues confronting the PNP included:

- The death of 22 detainees alleged to be members of the Abu Sayyaf during the siege of Camp Bagong Diwa in March.
- The proliferation of private armed groups in Abra, and the sacking of the entire police provincial force for its failure to implement the law there.
- The killing of journalists and the allegation of international media groups that the Philippines was the most murderous country worldwide for journalists.
- The unsolved political murders, including that of former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot.
- The accusation that a number of top PNP officials had been receiving payoffs from "jueteng" lords.

Their version

In an apparent consolidation of forces, the League of Provinces of the Philippines and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines are planning to hold on June 11 what they said would be their "version" of a people power uprising in support of Ms Arroyo.

The groups, comprising governors down to barangay officials, became the second and third to pledge support for Ms Arroyo in the last two days, after the Liberal Party.

Officials of the groups, led by Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, were in Malacañang yesterday.

"We will launch our own peaceful but united, dedicated and firm version of people power on June 11 to call on all sectors to unite, disregard all forms of destabilization, disinformation…," Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, their spokesperson, told reporters.

Evardone said the National Summit for Unity would be held at the Manila Hotel. *With reports from Fe Zamora and Christine O. Avendaño*

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US won't object . . .

From page A1

Roy Señeres, whom President Macapagal-Arroyo had earlier angrily accused of seeking US help to oust her, said this was how he interpreted the statements made by US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone to foreign correspondents on May 11.

He said Ricciardone admitted that "something is broken and it has to be fixed," and made it clear that only a "constitutional process" should be used to "fix" the problem.

"So my advice to Gloria is: Cut and cut cleanly," Señeres said.

Señeres also said that under the Constitution, the President could be removed from office through election, resignation, impeachment, or when the military would act "as protector of the people and the state."

He pointed out that the next presidential election was scheduled in 2010, and that Ms Arroyo had already said she would not resign.

Given these, Señeres said, impeachment and the Armed Forces taking on the role of "protector of the people and the state" were the only options left.

In April, the President twice confronted Señeres about his supposed efforts to undermine her leadership. He denied the accusation.

But Señeres admitted to the INQUIRER that on March 27, Easter Sunday, he visited Ricciardone at the US ambassador's residence in Forbes Park. He stressed, however, that it was a purely social call.

He quit the NLRC post on May 23 and said his resignation would take effect on June 30.

Conditioning

But according to administration ally Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, the President's enemies are trying to condition the public to the idea that the US government was behind moves to oust her.

Santiago said a disgruntled sector in big business could be financing a grand conspiracy to bring down Ms Arroyo.

She said it was too much of a coincidence that a taped conversation purportedly showing the President as trying to tamper with election results was made public when the latter's popularity was at its lowest and her family was accused of receiving "jueteng" payoffs. *(See story on Page A1.)*

"We already have this problem with jueteng; is it coincidence that she now has this problem with a doctored tape?" Santiago said, adding:

"Who released this tape, and why at this time? If this had come into the possession of her political enemies, they would have revealed it early. But it's been over a year, so what's the reason they sat on this incriminating evidence [and made it public] only now?"

Santiago said the coincidences were pointing to a plot to oust the President, and that unseen forces were paving the ground for her removal.

The senator said those who would benefit from Ms Arroyo's ouster could be behind the spate of controversies. But she expressed doubt that Vice President Noli de Castro would be so bold as to do it.

By Santiago's reckoning, businessmen out of the political loop could be part of the plot:

"There is always a sector in the big business community that is behind this. You need them because you need money to mobilize against an incumbent President, and you need money to have people going around the Armed Forces, which I understand is taking place at this time.

"Because of the financial requirements, you definitely have a group here of rich people, people from the business community, who are dissatisfied with the political patronage they are getting from President Arroyo, and who think that this is the best time to strike—if they are going to strike against her at all."

Santiago said the political opposition could also be part of the plot, and could even chip in with the cost of the mobilization against the President.

But House Minority Floor Leader Francis Escudero said the administration camp should stop accusing the opposition of destabilization.

"They should differentiate us from them," he said.

"[When] they were in the opposition, each morning that they woke up, they were thinking of ways and means to oust [President Joseph Estrada] so they would come to power—talking to generals, colonels, which is what they exactly did in 2001, plotting left and right.

"If that was how they were before, this is probably why they are afraid of their own shadows now. They think that we would also act that way. Well, we're different. We are not drooling for power."

Escudero said accusations that the scandals involving the President were part of an orchestrated destabilization campaign should not stop "the truth from coming out."

"Remember, it is the violation of the law, of the letter of the Constitution, which precipitated all of these," he said. "Instead of blaming the opposition or any other group, they should first look at themselves in the mirror because all of these came from their own action or inaction while in office."

People power

Escudero said the President should "understand, accept and embrace" people power, even if it would be used against her.

He recalled that Ms Arroyo "used the same principle and logic" in January 2001, when Estrada was ousted.

The people no longer liked the person in power so he [was] replaced. She used it, she benefited from it, and she understands the concept … She should accept and understand such an eventuality," Escudero said.

"Should it happen this time around, simply because that is what the people want, I expect her to be the very first one to understand, accept and embrace it, because she knows how it works. She used it once upon a time. And she should accept it even if it's there, staring her at the face," he said.

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The inaugural MVP Cup is more than the latest International Badminton Federation (IBF)-sanctioned prestige event on the international calendar. It's even more than the clamor and hoopla that have been building up over the weeks; after all it will be the first time Asia will take on Europe on such a scale. There is a deeper relevance to it all.

PLDT and SMART Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan, after whom the Cup was named, is a true champion of sports, at the forefront of local sports development throughout his life. "Badminton was actually my first game, after my Filipino-Chinese friends taught me the sport," he quietly explains. After that came pelota, squash, and his well-known support of local basketball through the PBA exploits of the Talk 'N Text squad.

He not only espouses the "sound mind, sound body" dictum, he lives it. Mr. Pangilinan who works out regularly, looks to be at a fitness level men half his age aspire to. He moves brisk and speaks forthright with a calm focus. At the helm of telecommunications giants PLDT and SMART, he feels he is at a position to advance local sports, particularly badminton, to an unprecedented level, already supporting a grassroots national badminton team formation with the PLDT and SMART Lead to Gold Program.

Welcome to the MVP Cup. Held from July 12-14 at the Philsports Arena, it will highlight the greatest talents from badminton's two strongest continents, Asia and Europe. PLDT is joined by wireless leader SMART. "Similar to the Ryder Cup in Golf, this event invites the top players in the sport to compete against each other in ways they normally aren't used to. Due to the requirements for player selections, the entire continents of Europe and Asia will cheer for their respective teams, and no single nation will be responsible for the team's victory. It will be a continental team effort that will unify both teams/continents and provide a bigger rivalry that has never been seen in the sport before. This is the type of unique event that SMART is proud to support," said Boy R. Martirez, Head of Personal Communications and Mobile Services of SMART.

The MVP Cup is a clarion call for the entire nation, to look inwards and further for world-class mettle. This clash of badminton titans will do well in inspiring Filipinos by giving them a glimpse of high-caliber athletics, to be of sound mind and body. It will make us appreciate what it really takes to be true champions.

PLDT and SMART Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan together with SMART PCMSD Head Boy Martirez confer with former first lady Ming Ramos on plans for the upcoming MVP Cup this July

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The stuff bagmen are made of

From page A1

of protection money," the confessed bagman said, referring to how he dealt with so-called *"ilegalistas"* and got them to fork over hundreds of thousands in protection money weekly.

Garcia was one of three witnesses that Archbishop Oscar Cruz has so far brought before the Senate to prove his claim that jueteng was more rampant now than during the term of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Presidential relatives

The witnesses have dragged the names of about 100 people into the scandal, including three people close to President Macapagal-Arroyo—First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, elder son Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo and brother-in-law Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo.

Garcia's physical appearance gave no hint of the clout he seemed to have wielded in the jueteng world.

He wore a simple polo shirt, looking almost unkempt. With a thinning moustache and receding hair, he might strike one as a bill collector.

Greed of protectors

The story he gave was largely unsubstantiated but it was the kind that gripped the audience.

Alluding to the seeming greed of unnamed jueteng protectors in government, Garcia said it came to a point where they were asking far too much so that he and colluding police officers had to look for sources of protection money beyond jueteng.

"We had to resort to protecting video *karera* and other illegal activities (in Central Luzon and in Bicol)," Garcia said.

A bagman must also be creative.

"I can also testify about illegal fishing and smuggling," Garcia said, referring to his experiences protecting illegal fishers in Bicol and smugglers in Mindanao.

'They trusted me'

Garcia claimed his boss was Senior Supt. Pierre Bucsit, an intelligence officer under Chief Supt. Rodolfo Tor when the latter was police director for Bicol in 2002.

"Colonel Bucsit told me to facilitate the '*ingreso*' or collection from jueteng. They trusted me with the right to deal with the jueteng lords in the province," Garcia said.

Garcia said he met with then jueteng operator and fellow whistle-blower Wilfredo Mayor and Tom Ranola of Albay, and they agreed on P400,000 a week for the regional police office.

He said he also talked with emissaries of alleged jueteng operators Bong Villafuerte of Camarines Sur and Gov. Jesus Typoco of Camarines Norte, and agreed on weekly payolas of P350,000 and P200,000, respectively.

All the big people Garcia named in his testimony denied his claims or said they had never met him.

Garcia said he courted trouble when he dealt with jueteng operators in Sorsogon.

War over turf

"They were quarreling over turf," he said referring to alleged operators Leony Lim, Alvin Liaco and a certain Igli.

Garcia said he gathered them in one restaurant, disarmed their bodyguards, and locked them in a private room.

"I pulled out my gun and told them, 'Are you going to fight among yourselves or are we going to talk business?'" Garcia said he told them.

That settled the differences.

But soon, local officials of Bicol started lobbying for Tor's relief.

Power of politicians

"That's when I first saw how powerful these local politicians are," Garcia said.

When Tor was reassigned to Central Mindanao, Garcia said Bucsit had him arrange protection money for police officials from operators of *"masiao,"* "Pick Three" and "Last Two" games.

After Mindanao, Garcia said he aligned himself with Senior Supt. Bienvenido Latag when the latter became police director of Camarines Sur.

Garcia, a resident of Pilar Village in Las Piñas City, said that at one time, he was making P80,000 a month in Albay alone. "Just enough to tide my family over," he said.

Bolt of enlightenment

A former Army trainee, Garcia said he got involved in jueteng in 1979. Later, he took part in the 1986 People Power revolution, on the side of the victorious rebels.

Among other claims, Garcia said he became in the 1990s an alleged bagman for NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco, then police director of the National Capital Region Police Office.

"I gave P800,000 a month," he said, adding the money was given to Supt. Melito Mabilin.

At some point, he was apparently struck by a bolt of enlightenment.

He said he decided to testify because he could no longer take the abuses police officials were receiving from politicians who used them as screens.

He spoke of a supposed confrontation between Senior Supt. Bienvenido Latag and Bong Villafuerte, son of incumbent Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, after the police officer stopped jueteng in the province and refused to relieve a police official.

"Bong Villafuerte went to [Latag's] quarters and grabbed Latag by the collar," Garcia said.

Latag was eventually relieved.

Villafuerte denied that any such incident happened.

Ex-Palace official surfaces, denies being bagman

By Tarra V. Quismundo

ESPINOSA

STILL wondering why he had been implicated in a jueteng scandal, a former Malacañang official yesterday surfaced to clear his name and say that he was ready to "give the real score."

Former Presidential Assistant for Bicol Affairs Mario Espinosa faced the media in a bid to disprove that he was ever involved in jueteng operations, as alleged by a confessed bagman during Monday's Senate hearing.

"I am not close to Attorney Arroyo. I am making this denial not for him, but to clear my good name, which to me is more precious than any commodity," Espinosa said, referring to claims that he had collected jueteng protection money for First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

"How could I act as a bagman? I think there are certain qualifications ... that you have to be really trusted," said Espinosa.

He said he was ready to face his accusers, even if it meant volunteering to testify at the Senate.

"The fact of the matter is ... I have been consistently against jueteng, illegal gambling and other illegal activities. I have never been, and do not need to be, the bagman for anybody," said Espinosa, who now runs a business in his province.

Espinosa said Archbishop Oscar Cruz and opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson contacted him through text messages the day before he was tagged as an alleged jueteng operator.

Espinosa said he declined an offer from Lacson to meet and talk about a witness who might implicate him in the gambling controversy.

PNP goes after cops linked . . .

From page A1

thorities to do that," said Bataoil. "In fact, that is already being done in the Senate."

Shortly after Monday's Senate hearing closed, PNP Director Avelino Razon said that an investigation must immediately be conducted to clear the PNP's name and get to the bottom of the issue "once and for all."

However, Razon said there was no need to relieve the implicated police officials from their posts while the investigation was under way.

Internal affairs

Inspector General Alexis Canonizado, chief of the Internal Affairs Service, also disclosed that he had asked the chief of the Special Anti-Illegal Gambling Task Force, Chief Supt. Florante Baguio, to conduct an investigation.

"I urged him to create a special unit under the task force to investigate all police officials named," Canonizado told the INQUIRER. "I told him I could lend him some of my men for that purpose."

The inspector general said Baguio agreed to do it. But he did not say how soon the investigation could start.

Canonizado said he wanted his office to investigate the allegations, but it lacked the funds to do it.

"We don't have money for travel, for example. We don't have operational funds for it," he said.

One of the IAS' mandates is to investigate alleged wrongdoing by policemen. Those found guilty by the IAS could be summarily dismissed from the service.

Also yesterday, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes said local officials proven to have harassed police officials into doing their dirty work should be taken to account.

"They should be punished," Reyes told the senators curtly after he was asked what should be done to local officials who want their respective chiefs of police to support and protect their illegal activities.

Demoralizing

Senators expressed alarm at the statement of Richard Garcia that the brother of Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Raymond Villafuerte had physically accosted the provincial police director, Bienvenido Latag, at the latter's barracks when he refused to allow jueteng operations in the province.

"This will have a demoralizing effect on the members of the police force to see their chief being physically abused," Sen. Alfredo Lim said.

Undersecretary Wencelito Andanar said the Department of Interior and Local Government would conduct its own discreet investigation of Garcia's remarks that some governors were not only protectors but were operators themselves of the illegal numbers game.

Andanar was himself implicated as being the recipient of P25,000 a week from jueteng operations.

"I don't have any use for jueteng lords," he said. "My office at the DILG has supervisory functions over neither the police nor the local governments."

Among the local officials Garcia implicated were Governors Jesus Typoco of Camarines Norte, Luis Rey Villafuerte of Camarines Sur, Raul Lee of Sorsogon and Armando Sanchez of Batangas, and Vice Gov. Boyet Joson of Nueva Ecija.

Other officers mentioned by Garcia were Senior Superintendents Pierre Bucsit, Rene Gumban, Mel Mabilin and Roberto Ronggavilla; Chief Superintendents Rodolfo Tor, Rowland Albano and Jaime Lasar, and National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

Those named had issued statements denying Garcia's allegations.

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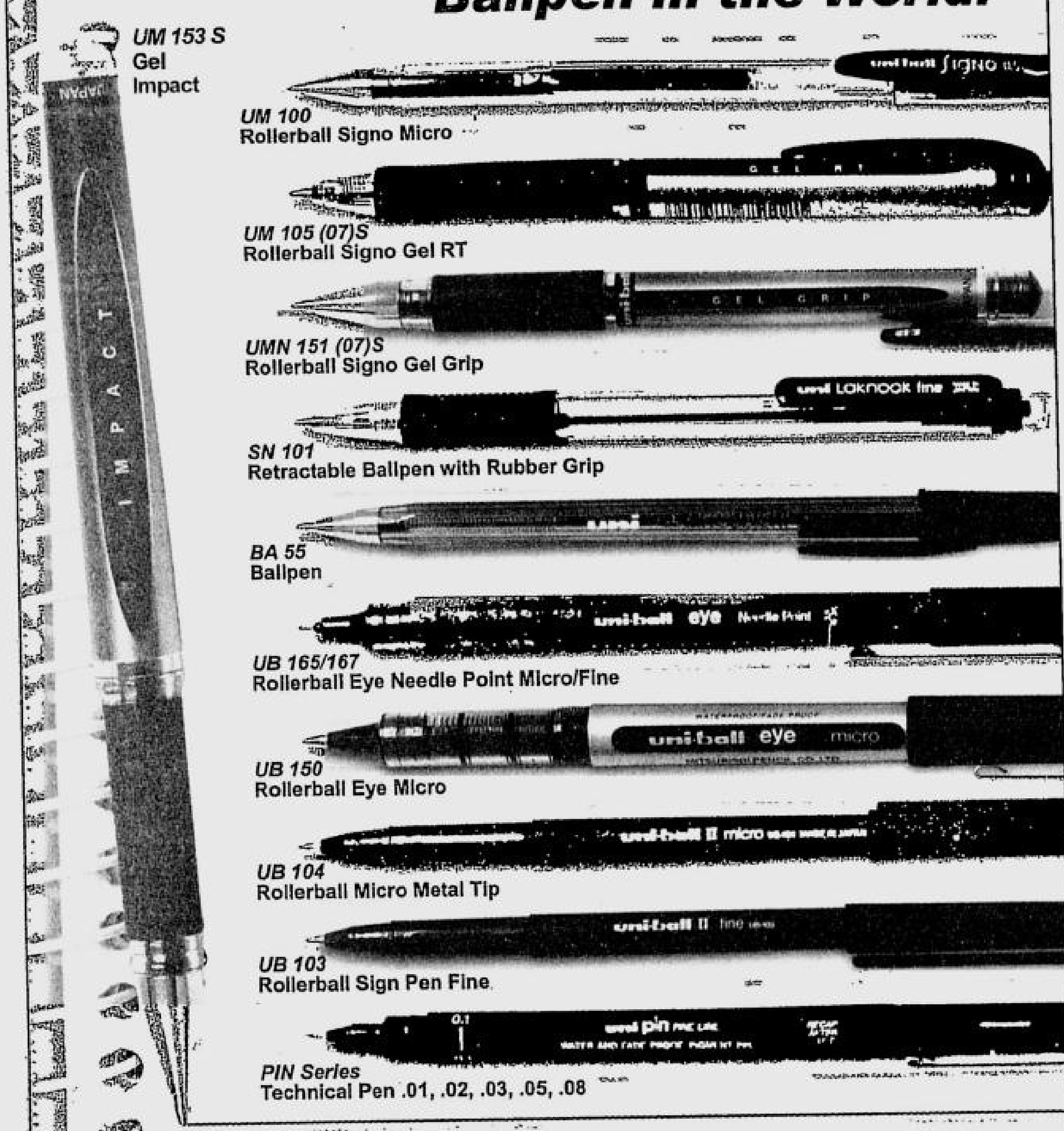

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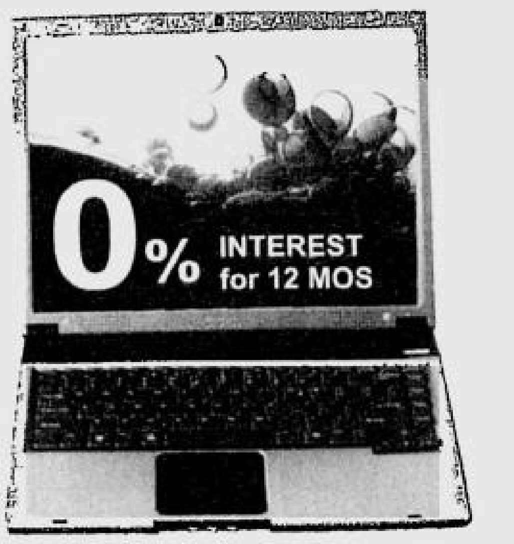

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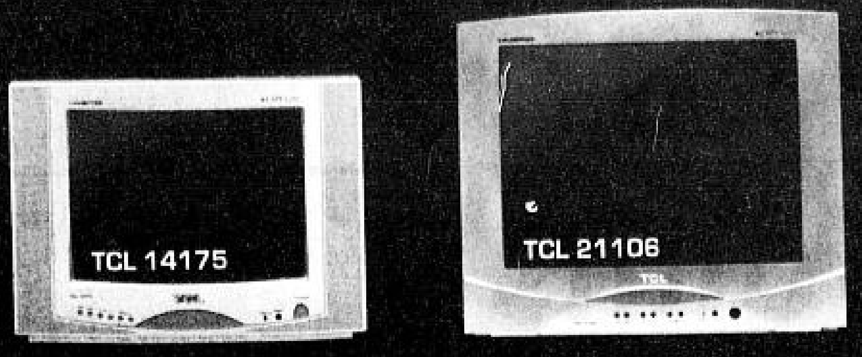

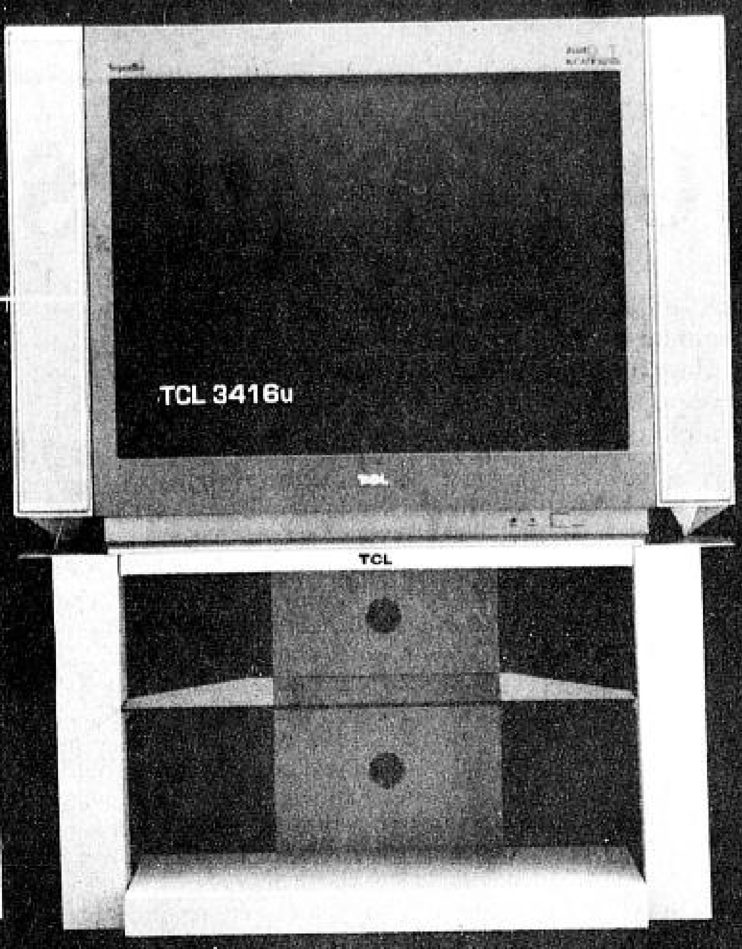

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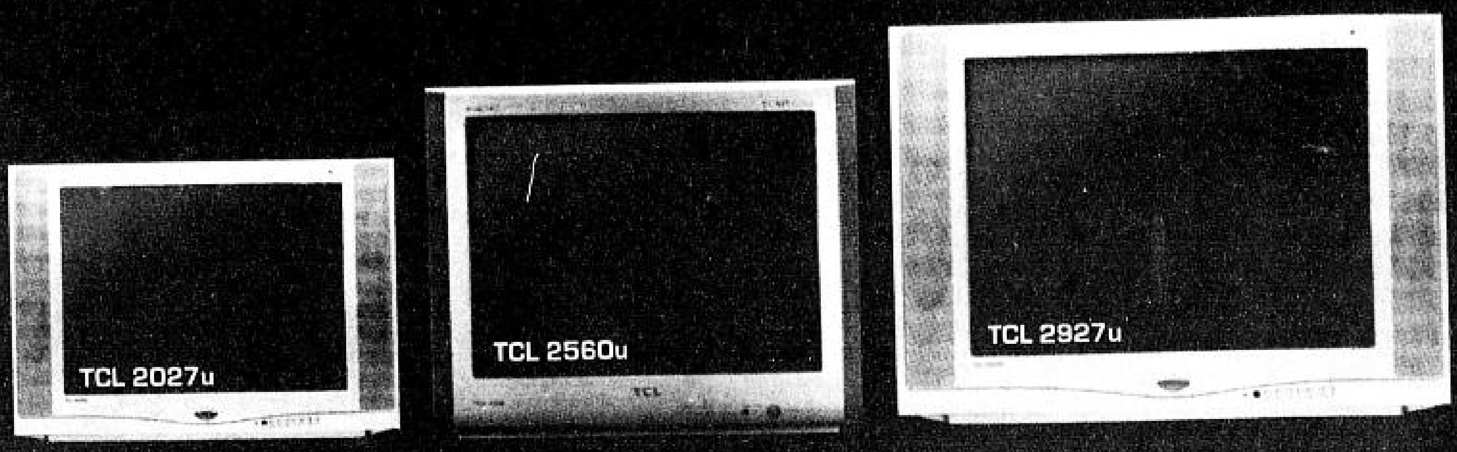

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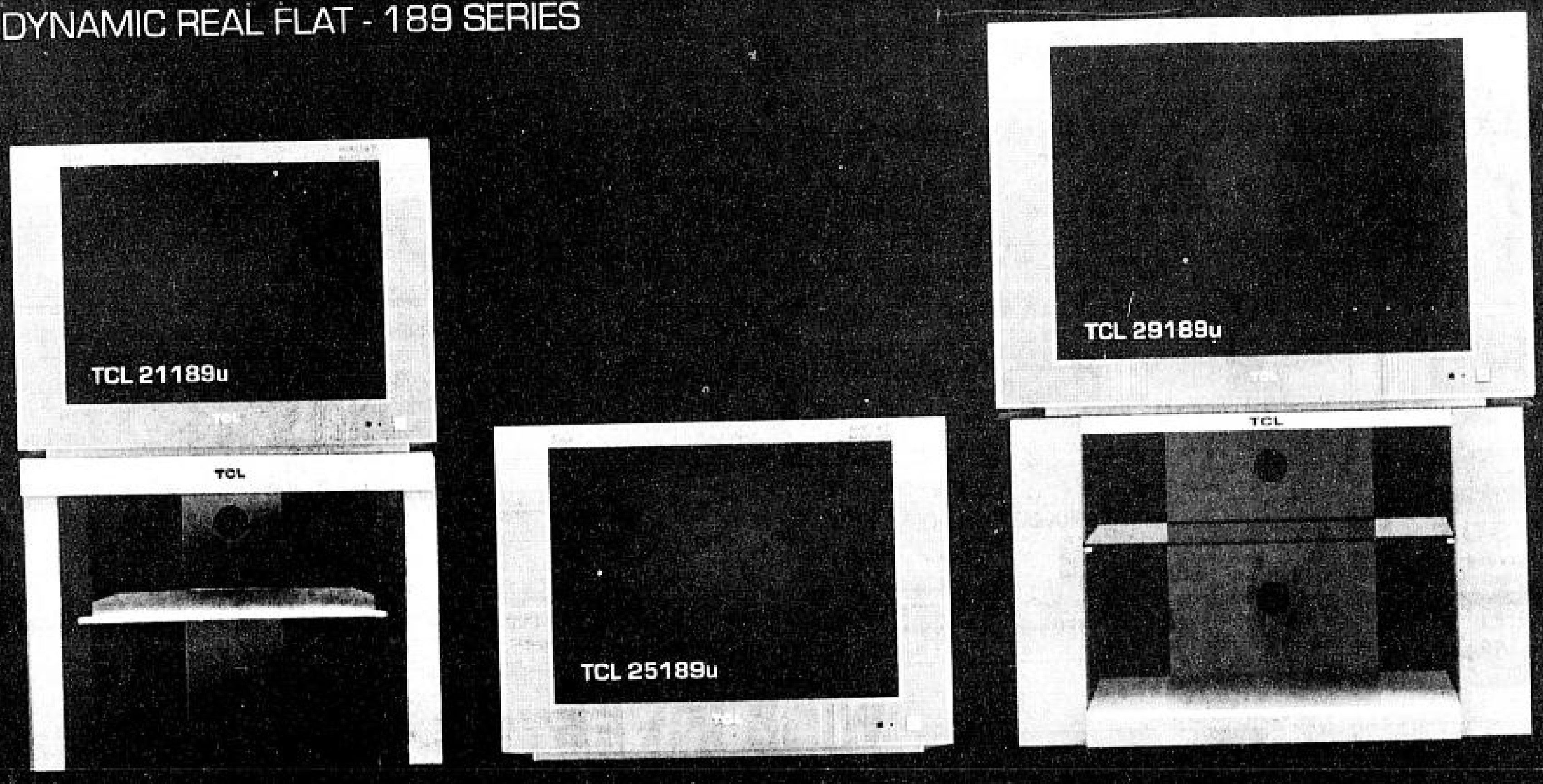

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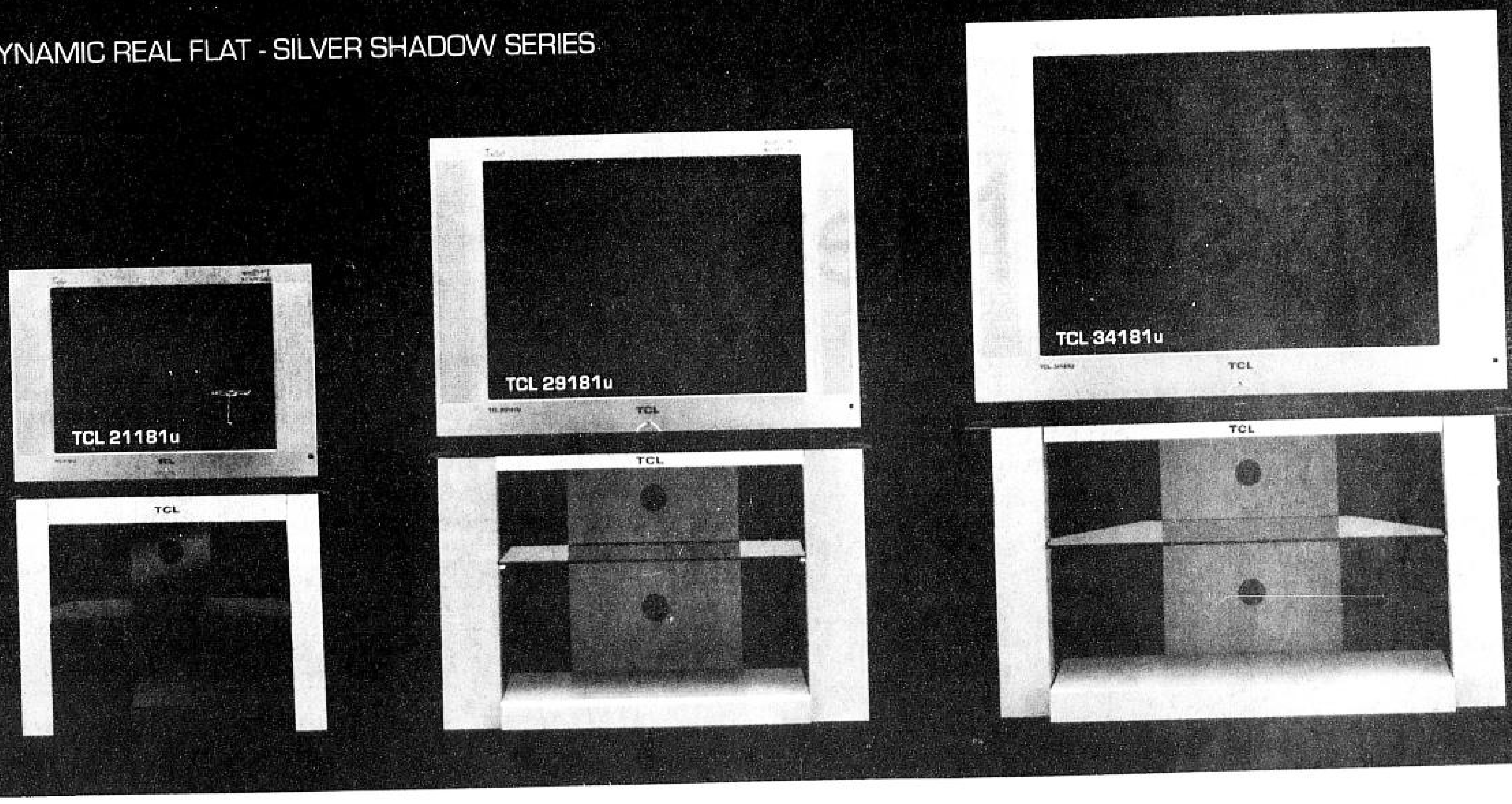

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bolivia president quits

LA PAZ, Bolivia—President Carlos Mesa, his 19-month-old government unraveling amid swelling street protests and a crippling blockade of the Bolivian capital by Indian and labor opponents, tendered his resignation to Congress in a late night nationally televised address.

Hours after huge street demonstrations paralyzed the capital and riot police fired tear gas to scatter demonstrators trying to lay siege to the Government Palace, Mesa declared Monday night that he was ready to step down in the face of growing disarray and the specter of violence.

Although Congress must decide formally whether to accept or reject what is Mesa's second resignation offer in three months, his aides signaled he intends to leave quickly, paving the way for Congress to find a successor to lead Bolivia out of its deepening political crisis.

"This is as far as I go," said Mesa somberly facing the camera, dressed in a charcoal gray suit and striped red tie. "For that reason I have decided to present my resignation as President of the Republic. I will continue to be president until Congress makes a decision about the future of the country."

The resignation offer came after a day of demonstrations in which tens of thousands of Indians, miners and labor union members protested in downtown La Paz in their largest antigovernment march in weeks.

No injuries were reported, but police made 22 arrests, among them protesters accused of brandishing dynamite, according to state television Canal Siete.

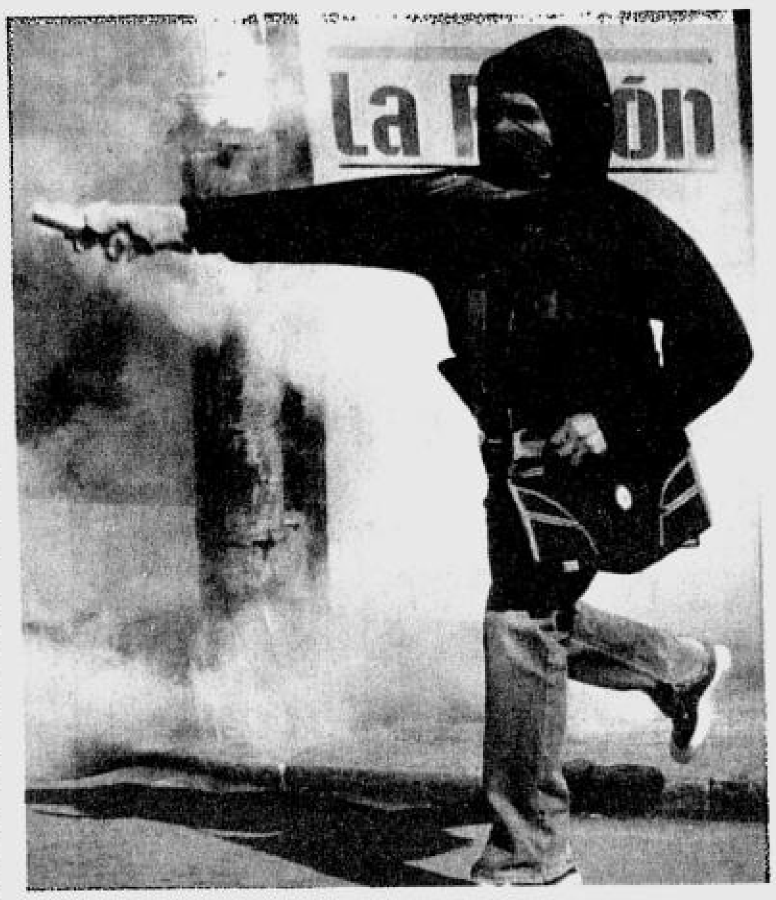
MESA: This is as far as I go.

The demonstrations raised tensions in this impoverished Andean nation of 9 million people, marking the fourth week of a swelling crisis that has seen protesters throw up road blockades that have strangled the capital and triggered gas and food shortages.

The crisis pits Indian and labor groups from the poorer eastern highlands, including La Paz and its satellite city of El Alto, against ruling blocs from Santa Cruz in the east and the oil-rich gas fields to the south that are pursuing greater autonomy.

The protests have steadily increased since Bolivia's Congress moved last month to increase taxes on foreign oil companies that have flocked to the country to develop its natural gas reserves—the second largest in South America after Venezuela.

The measure by lawmakers was intended to calm tensions in a country where antiglobalization anger runs high. But the move only unleashed new street demonstrations by protesters demanding the nationalization of the oil industry and a constitutional assembly to write a new constitution giving stronger representation to indigenous Indians, who make up about half the population. *AP*



A DEMONSTRATOR throws a tear gas canister back at riot police during Monday's clashes in La Paz. AP

Blair's wife blames predicament on sexism

WASHINGTON—The wife of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, accused at home of cashing in on her husband's position, blamed her predicament in part on sexism and the difficulties of balancing her professional life with being married to the prime minister.

Cherie Blair, a prominent human rights lawyer who also uses her maiden name, Booth, professionally, was in Washington on Monday for a long-planned appearance in the Nation's Capital Distinguished Speakers Series of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

She spoke just hours before her husband arrived in Washington early Tuesday for a meeting later in the day with President George W. Bush.

The juxtaposition of the prime minister's visit with his wife's speaking appearance—and its expected payday for her of tens of thousands of dollars—has stirred up critics in Britain who accuse her of exploiting her position to make money.

British press reports have put her fee for the 90-minute chat with American television anchor Paula Zahn as high as $54,000.

Asked about the uproar at home, Cherie Blair said: "It has crossed my mind that of all the 365 days in the year that Tony could have come, this was not my favorite." She reminded Zahn that her appearance had been scheduled for a long time.

Asked earlier about previous unfavorable press she had received, Cherie Blair said: "I just think you can't please all the people all the time. You're not going to get 100 percent approval... What you must do is be true to yourself."

The British press has been critical.

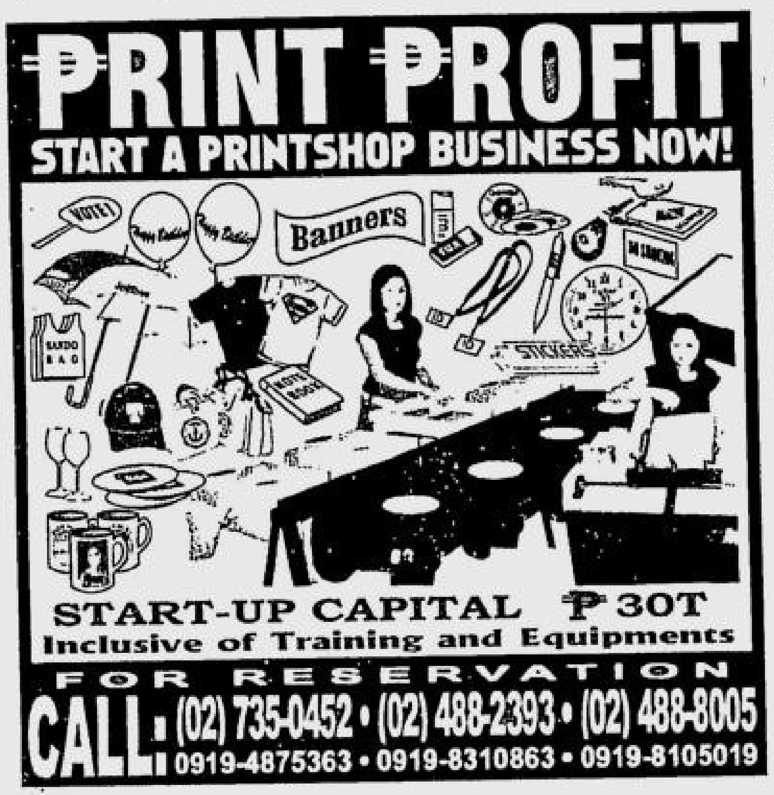
"The chance to make a lot of money in very little time has, once again, persuaded the prime minister's wife to demean herself and her husband's role," Patience Wheatcroft wrote in The Times. *AP*

Hospital superbug probed

LONDON — British health authorities said Tuesday they were investigating a new virulent strain of bacteria that may have been imported from the United States or Canada.

The germ, a new variety of the bacterium Clostridium difficile, has killed 12 people—almost all elderly—in a hospital outside the capital over the last 18 months, Britain's Health Protection Agency said.

Clostridium difficile was so named because it was difficult to grow in a laboratory when it was first discovered in the 1930s. *AP*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4 Iraq blasts kill 2 GIs, 16 others

BAGHDAD—Four bombings, including three suicide attacks, within seven minutes killed at least 18 people and wounded 39 in northern Iraq early Tuesday, while the US military said two Marines were killed in separate roadside explosions, sharply ending a relative lull in violence that fell over the country in recent days.

Police said another car bomb exploded in northern Baghdad, wounding 27 civilians and one policeman in another vicious attack Tuesday, which followed two days during which 11 people died, far below a daily average of more than only 20 people being killed in violence since Iraq's new government was announced April 28.

Hundreds of US and Iraqi soldiers descended on the remote northern city of Tal Afar, near the Syrian border, on Tuesday, launching a major operation against insurgents following weeks of attacks against Iraqi security services there.

Tuesday's early morning attacks in and around Hawija, 240 km north of Baghdad, appeared coordinated and aimed at checkpoints manned by members of Iraq's fledgling Army, which has been a constant target of insurgents opposed to the country's new US-backed government.

The first explosion, caused by a roadside bomb, rocked Hawija at around 9:30 a.m. before three suicide bombers waiting in queues of cars at Army checkpoints to the west and north of the town struck in quick succession. *AP*

Taiwan body OKs changes in charter

TAIPEI—A convention adopted sweeping changes to Taiwan's constitution Tuesday that favor the top two political parties and require that future amendments go directly before voters—a measure strongly opposed by China.

The 300-member National Assembly, chosen by popular ballot last month to address the constitutional changes, convened and approved the four amendments with 249 votes—24 more than the required three-quarters majority.

Both the ruling Democratic Progressive Party and the main opposition Nationalists backed the changes as a way of strengthening the self-governing island's democracy.

However, Beijing opposed the measure allowing direct popular votes on amendments, fearing that the ruling DPP might try to use such a poll to push toward making Taiwan's de facto independence permanent—though the bar for passing an amendment was set exceptionally high.

China and Taiwan split amid civil war in 1949, and Beijing still considers the island part of its territory to be reclaimed by force if necessary. *AP*

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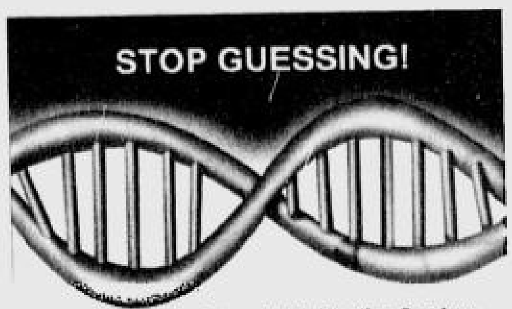

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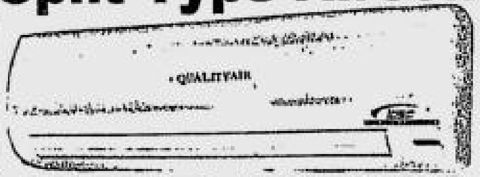

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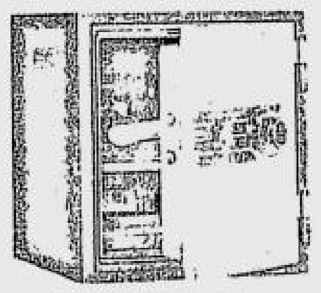

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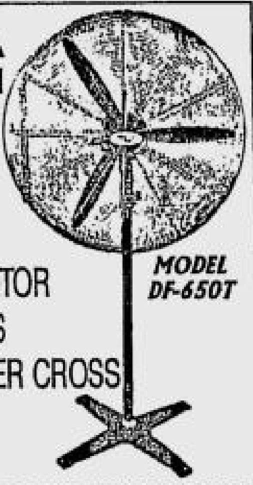

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OPINION

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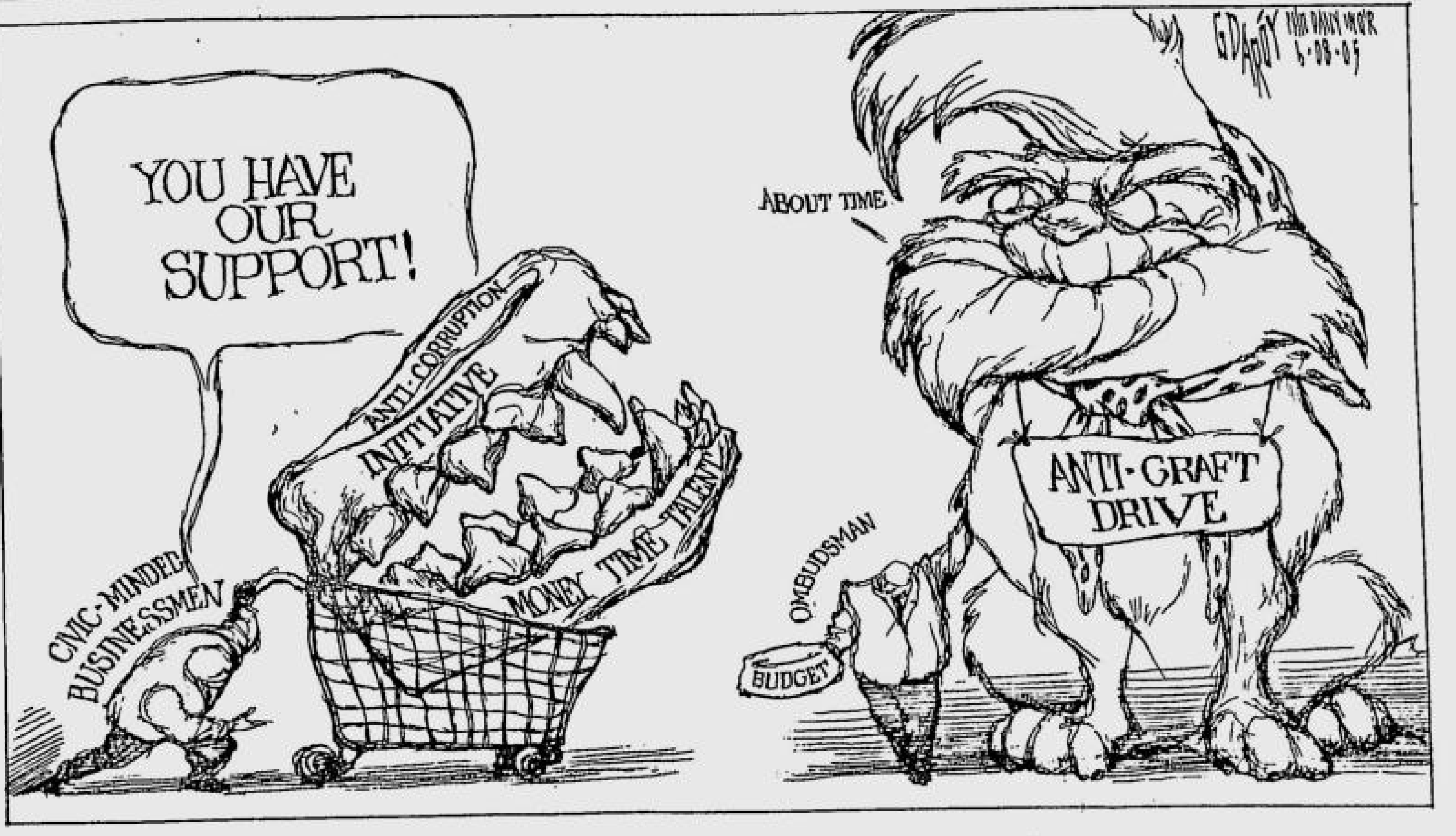

Mixed motives

EDITORIAL

THE MOST interesting part of the Senate hearing on *jueteng* took place when the hearing itself ended. Interviewed on television, Archibishop Oscar Cruz emphasized two points which have been overlooked in the wake of lurid revelations about million-peso payoffs to political and police officials. The first point concerns why some people in the illegal jueteng racket are willing to speak up now. The second concerns the country's police.

With regard to the first point, Cruz identified the sin of avarice, or lust for money, as the factor that moved jueteng operatives to speak out. The politicians, the bishop basically said, have become too greedy, to the extent that even the jueteng operators can't stand it. Too many politicians want too much at ever-increasing levels and frequencies, to continue allowing the illegal numbers game to remain profitable. The result is that jueteng operators and operatives are being squeezed out, and are now fighting back by testifying in the Senate inquiry.

This is similar, in a sense, to the motivations of Luis "Chavit" Singson, who might have kept quiet if President Joseph Estrada had ensured that he retained at least part of his old jueteng territory (and profits) and ensured his protection from other aspiring racketeers. When Singson felt that he was not only being unfairly squeezed out of the profits but had actually become the target of an assassination attempt, he spilled the beans.

There were many Filipinos who were willing to turn a blind eye to Estrada's defects as a president, but when his greed was not even tempered by a pretense at self control (or the semblance of a work ethic), even the normally corrupt turned suddenly virtuous. Estrada's gambling, womanizing and Mafia don-like behavior did not prevent his election, but his refusal to put up even the superficial appearances of a statesman doomed him to dismissal via people power. Jueteng operators are mounting a people power of sorts, and it is aimed at those who lack the innate sense of self-preservation—of live and let live—that enabled corrupt politicians, policemen and racketeers to live comfortably together for generations.

In other words, this is about self-preservation. And when gangsters are forced to fight in self-defense, nothing will stand in their way. This has played out to the bishop's—and the public's—advantage, as it is exposing the thoroughness, and rapaciousness, that characterize the whole jueteng underground culture. It is a sad commentary on our political and legal culture that some people think that corruption is all right, if kept at "tolerable" levels.

Cruz also spoke in defense of the men and women of the Philippine National Police. He condemned the present practice of reassigning police personnel, because to his mind, it only makes them more vulnerable to political pressure. Any police officer who is serious about clamping down on jueteng can be sent away, on the say-so of a politician. The bishop's views should be a wakeup call to the honest members of the police, as his views prove he is as much after their welfare as that of the larger society. If any good is to come out of the Senate hearings, eradicating the practice of subjecting police personnel to untoward political pressure should be one of its results.

Titillating as the wanton listing of names involved in jueteng may be, there remain big gaps in the stories given by the witnesses who have testified so far. Cruz says he is talking to two potential witnesses who are highly knowledgeable about the racket and who can fill in the gaps. Hopefully his persuasiveness and a lingering sense of conscience will persuade these witnesses to reveal what they know. Up to this point, all the public has is entertaining, but often contradictory, and circumstantial testimony. The public needs to know exactly to what extent the rot has reached, if the means to eliminate it are to be found. In the meantime, proposals, such as that of Senators Edgardo Angara and Juan Ponce Enrile to legalize jueteng, will only result in what a Kampi (the President's personal party) spokesman suggested last year. Which means a victory for the jueteng lords against the politicians, but no victory for those who want to finally be rid of it.

Teddy Benigno, journalist and patriot

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THEY laid to rest yesterday Teddy Benigno, journalist. As if bullets fired by assassins were not enough, deadly diseases like cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases are decimating the ranks of good journalists. Teddy's death is the greatest loss of all not only to journalism but also to the whole nation. To echo Shakespeare, I knew him, Horatio.

I cut my journalistic teeth under the supervision of Teddy, and when we moved to Newsmen's Row in Project 6, he was my next-door neighbor. (Blas Ople lived in the house directly behind us.)

When I was a journalism undergraduate writing for This Week Magazine of The Manila Chronicle, Agence France-Presse, whose office was in a big room adjacent to the Chronicle newsroom, needed extra newswriters. Teddy, already a celebrated sportswriter, was one of AFP's editors and he invited me to join the news agency. I was still going to school in the morning and working for the Chronicle in the afternoon, but I accepted his invitation. In the evenings, after knocking off at the Chronicle, I simply stepped through the door to the AFP newsroom and worked there until midnight.

AFP's Manila bureau chief was a big, fat Frenchman named Pierre whose typewriter was a Skywriter that looked so tiny on his big lap when he worked. Stories from abroad came in through the teletype in French. Teddy translated them into English and gave them to us for rewriting. We looked for leads that would be interesting to Filipino readers and rewrote the stories. Local stories sent to the main AFP office in France Teddy translated from English to French.

We knocked off at midnight after all the Manila newspapers have been put to bed. I was newly married then and when I got home I would find my bride crying, waiting for me, at the window of the rented room of the bungalow beside my father's house in Kamuning. When we moved later to Newsmen's Row, Teddy was my immediate next-door neighbor.

Our houses had no fences, and neighbors visited through the backyards, not through the front door. Project 6 then was like the end of the world. The buses stopped at Mindanao Avenue and we had to walk through the muddy streets to Roads 6 and 7 that bounded three blocks of houses reserved for journalists. Very few of us had cars. Teddy and I had none. When my wife had birth pains one night, I had to borrow the car of Tibo Mijares to drive her to the Far Eastern University Hospital.

Teddy already had a four- or five-year-old daughter then, Nena, by his first wife, a former beauty queen. Although their age difference was big, Nena and my own daughter became playmates. Our houses were at the edge of the housing project, bounded by a creek across which began cultivated rice fields.

Although we were poor, I was happy. I was starting a family, I had a modest house, I was finishing college, and I had two jobs. But I didn't have enough sleep and I was losing so much weight that the Chronicle editors got worried. They urged me to drop my AFP job and concentrate on my Chronicle job, offering to add what I was getting from the news agency to my Chronicle salary.

I didn't know how to tell Teddy that I was leaving AFP, but when I got the nerve to tell him, he was understanding (he had also noticed my loss of weight), said he was sorry to lose me but advised me to accept the offer.

Teddy was always a kind, intense, nationalistic man, unlike many other journalists who took life with ease and humor. But Teddy was a serious man who cared deeply for the common man, just like our neighbor Blas Ople. When the government cracked down on a suspected communist cell, Teddy was picked up along with other suspected members of the Communist Politburo, as was Jose Lansang, then editor of the Philippines Herald. Nothing came out of the accusation; Teddy was a nationalist, not a communist.

This intense nationalism he carried up to the end, even when he became spokesman of the government as press secretary of President Corazon Aquino, one of the most prestigious journalists to hold the job. There, he was christened "Teddyman" to distinguish him from another Teddy in Cory's Cabinet, Teddyboy Locsin, her speechwriter.

In his later years as a columnist and political analyst, Teddy became impatient with reforms in the government. No reforms were being made, and Teddy's impatience became more evident in his columns. They became angrier because time was running out. And he was not content with just reporting and analyzing what was happening but actually tried to make things happen by organizing a political movement.

Too bad cancer intervened. With Teddy's intensity, dedication and patriotism, his movement, who knows, could have delivered us from the evils that have long plagued us.

* * *

Now we have the tales of two tapes, one purportedly a conversation between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano that supposedly proves they cheated in the last polls, and the other purportedly the original from which the above was spliced allegedly by the opposition. The latter was released by Malacañang and is supposed to be a conversation between GMA and a political aide named "Gary" (who this "Gary" was, Malacañang did not say). Which of the two do you think is genuine?

The question that comes to mind is: Where did Malacañang get its own tape, assuming it is the original? Could it be that Malacañang was taping its own conversations, just like President Richard Nixon did, and his tapes brought his downfall during the Watergate scandal? Like Nixon's, will the Arroyo tapes cause her own downfall?

Sex, lies and videotape

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I HEARD about the recording some days ago via the fastest way news travels in this country today, which is by text message. Several people texted me to say there was a tape containing a conversation between Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and a Comelec official about a plot to rig the election results. A couple of others told me last weekend that Malacañang was going to try to defuse it by decrying its provenance (it presumably came from American sources) and authenticity even before it aired.

Given what was told me in the text messages about Malacañang's strategy, I wasn't surprised that Ignacio Bunye indignantly fulminated against it last Monday. He had just said the previous day that the recording was a hoax, no such conversation took place. He backtracked last Monday, admitting the voice on it was indeed his boss' but declaring that the voice at the other end had been spliced. He produced a couple of CDs—the digitalized version—one presumably containing the original that showed the President to be innocuously asking after the tally and the other presumably being the doctored exchange where the party at the other end was broadly hinting at improving GMA's numbers.

Bunye went on to rail at the idea that the President's phone was being bugged, an obscenity he laid at the feet of the opposition. That, he said, was clearly another step in their campaign to destabilize GMA. Malacañang, he said, was turning the tape over to the NBI for examination.

Bunye's revelations, however, have only served to raise more questions rather than put them to rest. Aquilino Pimentel is right to ask why Malacañang is so anxious to answer an accusation that hasn't yet been made. Most Filipinos have never even heard about the recording, not to speak of its contents. It hasn't been made public yet. Why would anyone want to expose a hoax that hasn't yet been sprung? Pimentel speaks for most Filipinos when he thanks Bunye for apprising us of The Conversation.

Rather than clearing itself, Malacañang may have just dug a deeper hole for itself by that premature revelation. People who have better things to do wait to be accused of wrongdoing before they defend themselves. Those who are sure of themselves do not even bother to dignify the accusation. It's people who have guilty consciences who defend themselves even before they are accused. They try to defuse the bomb by saying: "If you hear that I lied, cheated, and stole, please don't believe it, it's not true." Which only helps to set off the bomb more quickly.

I grant the technology exists for splicing sound or doing even more miraculous things, far more so today than in the past. Acid Pro, in particular, is an absolute wonder, and is used by the kids to do interesting garage recordings. But there are ways to determine the authenticity of a recorded conversation, which is in fact being done in the United States. There are experts who can, and do, testify to its pristine or adulterated quality in court. Quite apart from those who can determine its technical purity, there are experts who can testify to the integrity of the conversation, to the consistency of tone and substance. It's only in movies like "Mission Impossible" that the characters are easily able to get away with such fabrications.

It should be the easiest thing in the world to submit the tape to the scrutiny of recognized experts. The Interpol, or Scotland Yard, or FBI should have a battalion of them. Asking the NBI to determine its veracity is like asking Dracula to take charge of a blood bank: It is asking for trouble. It's not just that at the very time Bunye was proposing it, Reynaldo Wycoco was being accused by one of Archbishop Oscar Cruz's witnesses of being one of *jueteng's* big-league protectors. It's also, to repeat, that he was the fellow who hounded Acsa Ramirez after GMA made the mistake of accusing her, the whistleblower, of being the whistle-blown in public.

To be sure, it's not just the presumably doctored CD that should be submitted to the scrutiny of (foreign) experts, it's both of them. The accusation of splicing cuts both ways. Why should we naturally believe that what Malacañang claims to be the "original" is not in fact the doctored one? GMA's record of telling the truth is not exactly impressive.

But it's the part about the opposition bugging GMA's phone that takes the cake. Any thread of credibility Bunye's version of things might have had snaps altogether. It's like Malacañang's contention that the opposition and not the administration cheated massively in the elections. It defies the logic of things. Who has the means to mount massive cheating? Who has the means to bug private conversations? You just go by the record, who has been loudly demanding for a national ID system and wiretaps on the homes of private citizens in the name of fighting terrorism and crime? Who is most likely to have done that already?

I myself have had my e-mail address used to send people e-mails, some years ago in the form of pornographic material. Which has made me wish I have sent myself some of it! I most certainly do not blame the opposition for it.

But in the end, I don't know why we really need the tape to prove GMA cheated in the last elections. Shouldn't that be obvious, given the way GMA rewarded rather than punished Benjamin Abalos and his commissioners after they awarded the bid to computerize canvassing to a fly-by-night bidder, thus screwing a program this country had worked so long and so hard to implement? Wasn't that the clearest sign that the Abalos Comelec existed for one purpose only, which was to keep GMA in power by hook or by crook (emphasis on the latter)?

Sex, lies and videotape: Unfortunately (or fortunately), the only thing lacking is the sex. But you never know.

Teodoro Benigno's legacy

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

COLLEAGUES of Teddy Benigno in the Foreign Correspondents Club of the Philippines remembered him last Sunday evening, with recollection of incidents associated with his presidency of Focap during the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship.

The tributes paid to him by fellow journalists, as well as by his friends, will soon fade, but Focap will long be remembered as Benigno's enduring legacy to freedom of the press in the Philippines

Benigno founded Focap after the declaration of martial law by President Ferdinand Marcos, with resident foreign correspondents as its nucleus. It was intended to fill the vacuum left by the Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC), which became moribund as the dictatorship tightened its control of the country's political life.

As Manila bureau chief of Agence France-Presse, Teddy held a pivotal position to pull together the community of independent foreign correspondents to form an organization that served as the tiny enclave that kept press freedom alive in the country. Teddy used his position in AFP as cover for gathering news not for domestic consumption but for overseas distribution. This cover allowed foreign correspondents to write news about the Philippines, where developments on the clamp-down on democracy were keenly awaited in many world capitals. This cover gave them some degree of immunity from reprisals by the regime.

Since foreign correspondents were working for major international news organizations, including AFP, Associated Press, United Press International and Reuters whose home bases were in countries over which Marcos had no control, they had relative freedom, which was not enjoyed by the domestic press. Marcos then was courting international goodwill to obtain legitimacy for his martial-law regime. Moreover, he was projecting the image of a "soft authoritarian" regime. So, the less restrictive treatment of the foreign correspondents by Marcos, compared with the total clampdown of the Philippine press, was an act flowing not from a devotion to press freedom but from a need to win the goodwill of the international press and to ensure continuing aid from the United States at a time he was fighting a stronger communist insurgency.

It is a measure of Teddy's resistance to authoritarian rule and courage to fan the embers of press freedom and political liberties that he took the initiative to found Focap, which was in reality the only free press zone in the country. Aware of the political constraints of Marcos' power to completely muzzle the press, Teddy tested its limits.

On the excuse that Focap could serve as a forum where correspondents could conveniently talk with and gather information from political sources, including regime officials, and opposition politicians, the political scope of Focap expanded. It did not take long before Focap meetings became the platform where regime opponents expressed their views, given that until Marcos reopened the legislature and allowed somewhat restricted elections, opponents had no arena of freedom of expression other than Focap.

When the opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. was assassinated in August 1983, I learned about it from a news bulletin from the wires. At 4 p.m. of Aug. 21, I was scanning the wires while preparing the foreign news list for the story conference of editors of the Age newspaper in Melbourne. The first person I called by phone to confirm the news was Teddy at AFP. He was the only person in the press left in Manila, whose independence I could trust, and who was not in Marcos' jail or who had not gone underground. "There's tumult here," said Teddy who had just come from the Manila International Airport. "The airport is surrounded by troops."

My relations with Teddy were mainly professional. They can't be described as close or personal. We respected each other and knew what we were capable of. Teddy was competitive and worked very hard; he spent long hours on the job, often beyond normal endurance. Even when he was no longer a police reporter or sports writer for the Manila Chronicle, and had begun writing political commentary, he was essentially a reporter. He covered breaking events and was never an armchair pundit.

Although my paper then—the Daily Mirror, for which I covered foreign affairs for more than 10 years—subscribed to AFP's services, we competed for news in the diplomatic beat. Of all the wire services based in Manila, I tended to have more affinity with AFP and I had more chemistry with its French bureau chiefs. When Teddy went on a scholarship to Paris on leave from Manila in the late 1960s, he asked me to help AFP in covering an important conference in Manila on the Vietnam war, in which the United States was getting increasingly deeply involved. On the last day of the conference, I got a copy of the communiqué five hours before it was issued, leaked to me by an important source, and I sent out a story to AFP Paris. AFP scooped all other wire services by five hours.

Following that, Teddy and I became close collaborators in news reporting. When I covered foreign news overseas—for example, the coup in Indonesia in 1956 and the American bombing of Hanoi in 1967—Teddy got AFP bureaus in Jakarta and Hanoi to help me. They gave me access to their facilities.

There are many things I don't know about him and his private life, but my memories are built on the working relationship between two hard-nosed newspapermen who brooked no nonsense between them and their news sources. Teddy's political views on revolution or strong leadership can easily be misunderstood. His views are more profound than just regime change. They stem from the belief that there is no real change unless *liberté* is underpinned by *égalité*.

Back-to-school blues

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"USUAL complaints plague first day of classes," went a newspaper headline yesterday, the litany of "usual" complaints ranging from public schools charging illegal fees, to a classroom shortage miraculously reduced from 57,930 to "just" 8,644.

As expected, splashed on the front pages of newspapers were photos illustrating this classroom lack, including one showing children huddled in corridors because they could not be accommodated in classrooms.

The pressure on the country's educational system is unrelenting. A total of 17.6 million students went back to the country's 42,000 public elementary and high schools Monday, while another 4.4 million students went to private schools, colleges and universities.

Indeed, "rapid enrollment increases" have plagued the educational system, but especially public schools, in the last three decades. As cited by economist Dr. Alex Herrin in his study on "Population and Basic Education" (in the book "The Ties that Bind: Population and Development in the Philippines"), elementary school enrollment rose from around 7 million pupils in 1970-71 to 12.8 million in 2000-01, with an estimated 93 percent in public elementary schools.

While "the high value placed on education by both the government and its citizens is reflected in the high levels of enrollment," writes Herrin, this has also resulted in a low proportion of students who manage to complete basic education, as well as in the poor overall quality of education available to them.

* * *

"COHORT survival rate," the proportion of students who enter first grade or first year and manage to reach Grade 6 or fourth year high school, has remained at about the same level over the last 20 years, says Herrin. This rate averaged 68 percent at the elementary level in the last 10 years or so, and 73 percent at the high school level.

This is not exactly good news, because, with the rapid rise in enrollment figures, this means the absolute number of students dropping out of school has also been rising.

Moreover, notes Herrin, cohort survival rates varied by region, with a low average of 34 percent in the ARMM to a high 80 percent in Ilocos and the NCR. The figure likewise varies by socioeconomic status, with the cohort survival rate of children from poorer households at 57 percent compared to 89 percent for children in richer households.

Already old news are the falling achievement levels of students in both public elementary and secondary schools, with students achieving "mean" scores on assessment tests of only around 50 percent. "If 75 percent is considered passing, then on average students...were learning only two-thirds of what was expected of them," says Herrin.

As if this scenario were not grim enough, Herrin says pressures on the educational system will only increase in future. Even if fertility declines rapidly in the next decade or so, Herrin says the population is expected to grow well into the second half of the century. Under a scenario of high population growth, the school-age population will grow from 26 million in 2000 to 32 million in 2025.

How many more classrooms will be needed then? And how many more children will be leaving school, or learning next to nothing even while in it?

* * *

HERRIN spells out the link between current fertility levels and the education scenario: "(The) continued growth of the school-age population (means) rising expenditures for basic education are needed just to keep enrollment rates constant. However, if fertility declines more rapidly than recent trends, similar increases in expenditures can be spent for further increasing participation rates, survival rates and learning achievements. The role of declining fertility will be more significant if national resources for education cannot be generated fast enough to address the necessary time lags to achieve successful reforms in economic policy as well as in the financing of education."

Mario Taguiwalo, in another article ("Government Resources and Population Dynamics") in the same book, expands Herrin's findings for the rest of the social services sector. "It seems clear that the actual impact from past spending of government resources on human development leaves much to be desired," he writes. "Indicators point to the failure of the government's human development efforts...At less than P10,000 per Filipino per year, government spending is severely inadequate for a poor Filipino household that requires subsidized basic health, basic education, protection against crimes, and participation in essential duties of citizenship."

* * *

BUT what if the Philippines, asks Taguiwalo, "succeeded in reducing unwanted fertility starting in 1975, so that actual population in 1999 were 25 percent less than it was, while government expenditure remained at the same level"? The resulting average per capita spending per Filipino, he says, "could have been increased to P12,238, or about 30 percent more than the average actual per capita spending" in the same year. If one were to combine the effects of both reduced population growth and a more pro-poor public expenditure, says Taguiwalo, "the resulting per capita spending for the bottom 30 percent...could reach P28,556, which is more than three times the actual average per capita government spending per Filipino in 1999."

That's the "what if." What transpired instead was: "Population growth was not significantly reduced...government resources were not significantly increased...Productivity and efficiency of government agencies were not radically improved...(and) focus of government spending to correct inequities in income and wealth did not significantly improve for the poorest to allow these most disadvantaged to catch up."

Paris in Rizal's eyes

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

FRENCH Spring in Manila is upon us again. For the past seven years, the Embassy of France has been bringing films, music, food and other events to add spice to our cultural scene and, of course, make lasting inroads into Philippine life that is not possible through normal diplomacy or politics. Through a succession of ambassadors—Samuel le Carruyer de Beauvais, Gilles Chouraqui, and now Renee Veyret—I have gone through different French Springs in Manila and whatever unwanted pounds I carry like a lifesaver around my tummy is a testament to their success, for food and music are really shortcuts to a beast's heart.

If Rizal were alive today, he would probably be attending the events of the French Spring. Based on his travel writings from Paris, it is fairly obvious that he was more partial to France than Spain. Writing to his family from Paris on June 21, 1883, he gives his address as Hotel de Paris, 37 rue de Maubeuge. If I'm not mistaken, the hotel is still in operation and now carries a historical marker by its doorway declaring our hero's stay there in 1883.

Today, one travels little over two hours by plane from Madrid to Paris. In 1883, Rizal described the same trip by train as "the best and fastest" he took—at 36 hours. He compared the bare landscape of Spain with the pretty and pleasing landscape of France. He even noted the physical features of the Basques and commented on the industry of the women, some of whom he saw pulling carts, which should, otherwise, be pulled by oxen. He shared the compartment with Spaniards who were traveling to London to learn English, so they all got good practice along the way.

Not much has changed since Rizal's time; Paris is still expensive. Rizal stayed in a budget hotel where other Filipinos were staying. His room cost seven duros a month, not including food or light. Little wonder he bought candles so he could read at night. Rizal complained that "here everything is dear." To save on transport cost, Rizal walked. He described his first walk around the city:

"In the first hours, I went around and from the big area I have walked and from the little I have visited, I can figure out how big is this which they call Babylonia. Fill the area of Calamba, Cabuyao and Santa Rosa with magnificent houses and you will have Paris, more or less; and I imagine it thus, because to cross it from one end to another by coach, more than one hour and a half is necessary. Here man is truly an ant; there are streets the end of which cannot be seen [remember, Rizal wrote this long before we got Edsa], and nevertheless they are straight, wide and well laid-out; shops and big stores everywhere; coaches for hire are said to be as many as 25,000 [again, Rizal did not live to see our cities choked by taxis, jeeps, buses and other vehicles].

"Transients enliven and fill the streets, so do the stores, restaurants, cafés, buillons, beer saloons and gardens and monuments. On every street, however small it is, one finds at least a lodging house, and all these hotels are filled because travelers come and go from different parts of the world, such that one always sees new faces, trunks and suitcases on all sides, different vestments, foreign types, among whom we, ourselves, are. Here they call us Japanese, because these abound here in great numbers."

(Today the Japanese tourists are still a constant feature in Paris, especially in the Louis Vuitton shops, the only difference being that in Rizal's time, he was always mistaken for a Japanese, which doesn't happen so often to me these days. At one point, Rizal even impersonated a Japanese and pretended he was the son of a nobleman sent to France to learn Western language and civilization.)

Filipino tourists, being great shoppers, are often bought to the high-end department stores like Galeries Lafayette or Printemps. They rarely venture into the French equivalent of our own ShoeMart, called Bon Marche (literally good buy or cheap), that was patronized by our national hero. He described the store:

"Here in these establishments, all and sundry are sold except food although I believe having seen there a café and a restaurant. This store occupies one whole block, the floors of the building as big as the entire space between our house and the post office. So that you can form an idea as to how big it is, it keeps inside 150 Norman and English horses whose only job is to deliver the merchandise to the house of the buyers, horses that occupy an entire big building. Apropos, Norman houses, mine looks like them although it is smaller, for these have wide haunches and big muscles. They serve only for pulling and are very strong; there are some which are like elephants."

A horse as big as an elephant? Maybe Rizal was referring to the pygmy elephant found by archeologists in the Philippines and christened "Elephas Beyeri" after H. Otley Beyer, the acknowledged "Father of Philippine Anthropology." Maybe Rizal was exaggerating to make his family back in Calamba laugh.

Rizal's travel letters show a Filipino dealing with the world, comparing it with the Philippines and the place of his birth. For expatriate Filipinos of the time, who would later become heroes, France was a muse, an inspiration.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

The big C

CANCER specialists discussing energy therapies, mind-body interventions, acupuncture, herbal medicine? Why not? The theme of the Philippine Society of Oncologists' (PSO) midyear convention last May 28 was "CAM in Cancer Management: Screening Facts from Fantasy."

CAM is medicalese for complementary and alternative medicine, and the oncologists are beginning to realize how important these therapies are to their patients. I was only able to attend the morning session but that half of the convention, with such experts as Dr. Corazon Ngelangel, Dr. Leonila Dans, Dr. Isidro Sia and Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan, proved to be an exciting morning, with a rich, sometimes provocative, exchange of ideas.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Since so many of us live with cancer, as patients, as survivors, or as caregivers, I thought it would be useful to share some of the thoughts I had during that morning session.

'Bukol,' cysts, tumors

I ended up as one of the speakers at the PSO convention partly because you never say no to Dr. Rafael Claudio, who is currently president of PSO, and partly because I was intrigued by the topic assigned to me: the socio-cultural basis of CAM use. The more I thought about it, the more strongly I felt that maybe "CAM" wasn't a very accurate term because what health professionals think is "complementary" and "alternative" may actually be "mainstream" and "preferred" medicine for many Filipinos.

In my session I urged the doctors and other health professionals to try to understand local concepts about cancers. In terminologies alone, Filipinos have different interpretations and meanings of cancers. When a doctor checking a patient says there's a "*bukol*" (lump), it can induce terrible feelings of dread in the patient and relatives. Filipinos lump *bukol* with cysts and tumors and myomas: all are bad, all are ominous, triggering a desperate cycle of searching for explanations (Why me? Why now?) and cures.

People tend to use a patchwork of explanations for cancer. Physical trauma is widely believed to cause cancer: "Oh yes, he hit his head on a window 15 years ago and that became a brain cancer." Breast cancers are likewise attributed to physical trauma, the Tagalog term "*pal---- l----*," leaving little to the imagination and giving us insights into why Filipinas may be reluctant to conduct breast self-examination.

Many conversations typically have the latest "*nakakakanser*" (it causes cancer!) rumors, from water in reused plastic bottles to sugar substitutes in sidewalk vendors' drinks. Myths always have an element of truth in them, but sensationalism tends to take over and people lose sight of far more serious threats to our health such as cigarettes and environmental pollution. Neither do we discuss genetic factors in some types of cancer, and how we might take extra precautions if there's a family history for these cancers.

Moral panic

Filipinos also tend to have an over-inflated fear of oral contraceptives as a cause of cancer. This does not come accidentally since anti-family planning groups constantly spread wrong information about the contraceptives and cancers.

Underlying the fear of contraceptives as a cause of cancer is the idea that these are "unnatural" chemicals (especially because of the way we distinguish "artificial" contraceptives from "natural" family planning). There's a certain degree of moral panic tied to cancer, which are linked to "bad" lifestyles: ah he got it because he wouldn't give up smoking, or she was taking the pill, with insinuations of promiscuity. I've also heard people whispering, "He got prostate cancer because he was such a ladies' man when he was young."

The insinuations of neglect, even immorality, around cancer have contributed to the stigma of cancer. The American writer Susan Sontag wrote a classic book in 1978 called "Illness as Metaphor" where she discussed tuberculosis and cancer. Herself battling cancer at that time, she wrote: "Cancer patients are lied to, not just because the disease is (or is thought to be) a death sentence, but because it is felt to be obscene—in the original meaning of that word: ill-omened, abominable, repugnant to the senses."

The stigma around cancer forces the disease underground and, in the Philippine context, creates parallel worlds of treatment. Given our strong religious culture, plus cancer's connotations of being a disease that comes from being "bad," it shouldn't be surprising people turn to faith healing and the supernatural.

Because cancer is seen as such a powerful disease, the search is for extraordinary cures. CAM is not always a low-cost option; often people spend much more for medicines imported from China for example, or flying off to some special treatment clinic abroad.

The problems become serious when cancer patients don't tell their doctors about their alternative treatments. Others may even stop seeing the doctors, especially if the alternative treatments seem to be working.

Coming out

There are healthy signs that cancer is slowly shedding its stigma. In Western countries, people have actually written books about their battle with cancer, often inspiring other cancer patients to fight on.

In the Philippines, we have groups like ICARE, composed of women living with breast cancer. There's even a local magazine now called CA (taking off from health professionals' way of referring to cancer), which includes interviews with cancer survivors, explaining how they are facing up to the challenge of cancer. Note how the term "survivor" is preferred to the more passive "patient."

As more people come out in the open about cancer, we will be in a better position to correct misconceptions and tackle the real issues. The moralizing has to stop: cancer affects very young children and people who have never had sex. As for lung cancer, we need to think, too, of the advertising and social pressure that got people smoking in the first place, rather than blaming the smoker alone.

Cancer treatment need not be so schizophrenic. The point about the PSO's midyear convention was to get doctors to be more open to alternative therapies and to let their patients know they're open. This way, the doctor can monitor the other treatments being tried by the patient.

Many of the alternative therapies don't necessarily cure the cancer itself, but can help as supportive treatment. For example, acupuncture can help control pain and nausea (especially for patients going through chemo). The simple ginger (*luya*) also helps with nausea. Many medicinal preparations may help to strengthen the body to fight the cancer. Therapeutic massages help, sometimes simply as a way of signifying the family cares.

With time, all these experiences can be shared so others can be helped as well. The big C will remain a big C, but one that will not be as invincible as it seems today.

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AFP's Boracay resort not plush

I REFER to the recent controversy over the so-called AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) "resort" in Boracay.

I think it's unfortunate that media highlighted this project, which remains pending for lack of funds. However, permit me to state a few facts, which I feel should be emphasized.

Like the military establishments of other countries, the AFP has a special services program under the larger Morale and Welfare Program (M&W). The budget process always incorporates M&W under the 11 functions of AFP's Personnel (J-1). M&W has two parts, the programmed portion (which includes recreational and sports facilities) and the non-appropriated fund portion (which also includes recreational and sports).

Congress and the Department of Budget and Management have been reluctant to fund the programmed portion because of fund shortage. When I was the J-1 chief in 1988-90, I reviewed this and intended to expand the non-appropriated portion since the AFP Commissary and Exchange Service (AFPCES), from which some funds could be sourced, was doing fine. However, Congress recalled the tax-free exemption in 1990 or 1991, thus the AFP could not pursue the same as envisioned.

There was an AFP Rest Center in Camp Allen, Baguio. It is no longer usable. I believe that it should be revived. Part of the PN reservation in Ternate, Cavite should also be used for family recreation. Our guideline then, which apparently is being followed in the case of the Rest Center in Boracay, is to make these self-liquidating, but with fees affordable for the lowly paid soldier.

If you visit the area where it is located, you would be disappointed because it is in an isolated area, with an unlit, rough barangay road and with insufficient amenities. I have been told that the plans would be amended to remove any semblance of luxury (if any).

I suggest that Congress ask the AFP for a briefing on the matter, direct whatever guidance it can give, and provide whatever help it also can to bolster the AFP's M&W.

—COMMODORE CARLOS L. AGUSTIN, AFP (ret.), president,
National Defense College of the Philippines,
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo,
Quezon City 1110

Symbol of corruption and tyranny

THE EXPERIENCE of Conrado de Quiros as a victim of abuse of power, about which he wrote in his column "Drunk with power" (PDI, 5/31/05) is common to many motorists and commuters.

The unmitigated self-importance of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez in justifying the arrogance of his drivers, as well as those of other high government officials, is simply indicative of the fact that the character and attitude of these government officials do not match the beauty of the expensive and luxurious motor vehicles they ride in, most of which were purchased with taxpayers' money.

The first thing one should do when assuming a powerful position in government is to conduct a seminar for his employees, including his drivers, with emphasis on road courtesy. In fact, as government officials and employees, they should give way to fellow motorists who are entitled to be served by the government. Public officials and employees should be educated and trained to act and behave in a manner that will earn them respect and restore the people's belief in their government.

Currently, the special license plate attached to a government or private vehicle no longer symbolizes the dignity that goes with the power and authority vested by the people upon the user or owner. It unmistakably symbolizes corruption and tyranny.

—IGME PINTALUNA,
igmepin@yahoo.com.sg

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Scaring witnesses

THERE can be only one explanation for Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's eagerness to prosecute the self-confessed *jueteng* operators who have come into the open to testify against government officials and "highly connected" individuals—he is protecting somebody (or a group of people) from (further) being named or linked to jueteng in the jueteng hearings. He wants to scare future witnesses from testifying so that no confirmatory evidence will come out.

Gonzalez is acting as if he's afraid of what possible witnesses may say. He has said his boss is the President. So, is that why it seems like he is protecting her from what future witnesses may say? He may have been hired by the President, but he draws his salary from coffers funded by taxes paid by ordinary citizens. He should be more circumspect and act with the country's interest in mind.

It is in the country's interest that as many witnesses as possible come out to give as much information about jueteng. It is not in the country's interest to prosecute the small-time jueteng operators.

—LUGE BAGO,
mariallb@gmail.com

Oppose Palparan's promotion

WE vehemently oppose the promotion of Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, which is now under consideration by the Commission on Appointments.

His promotion would be a direct insult to the people of Eastern Visayas, where human rights violations have become commonplace since he assumed office as top military commander of the region, most especially because the violations have been blamed on him. It would be an insult to the people of Mindoro where he was also accused of committing the same violations when he was the provincial commander of that province. Considering the doubts and the controversies he has created among freedom-loving Filipinos, Palparan's promotion would be an insult to the entire Filipino people.

As concerned Eastern Visayans residing and working in Metro Manila and elsewhere, we cannot in conscience close our eyes and ears or stand and watch silently as our fellow Waray-Warays are being slaughtered, harassed and arbitrarily incarcerated with impunity simply because they are vocal critics of government or because they are leaders and members of progressive organizations. We fiercely condemn this irrational, inhuman and militarist reaction to legitimate political dissent in Eastern Visayas.

We call on all Samarnons, Leyteños and Biliranons to unite and join the flock of human rights defenders. We have already suffered a lot of misery. Our natural resources have been plundered by foreign and local logging and mining companies. This time, our right to live and right to express our grievances and dissent are being abused by those expected to safeguard and respect them.

We call on the honorable and decent members of the Commission on Appointments to oppose and prevent the promotion of Palparan.

—TITO VARELA,
chair (vice mayor, Caloocan City),
CLARO PICZON, spokesman
(former budget undersecretary),
Ugop Samarnon

High oil prices, high treason

THIS is in reaction to the article, titled "We don't have a cartel," of Rex V. Tantiongco. (PDI, 4/17/05) We distinctly remember Tantiongco, now the executive director of the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association, as the former chair of the Energy Regulatory Board (now Energy Regulatory Commission) who authorized Meralco in 1994 to provisionally increase its rate. This resulted in the overcollection by Meralco of P30 billion that the Supreme Court ordered refunded. He was also the chief regulator of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System who approved water rate increases from the original amount of P3.50 per c.u. m. His past performance as a government regulator only showed him to be pro-utilities.

How can Tantiangco honestly say "there is no cartel"? The association he heads and its members appear to be members of the cartel. The strongest argument on the existence of the cartel: members move and act collectively as one; their prices are almost the same; and they are very fast in increasing but very slow in rolling back prices.

Incidentally, what happened to the exposé of Rep. Tet Garcia of Bataan who accused the giant oil companies of bilking the consumers by P3 per liter through wrong price computation? Considering that this overcharging has been going on for years, how many billions could have been robbed from the people? Are the Commission on Audit and the Department of Energy counterchecking the price computation and its justification before any increase is implemented?

The act of government in surrendering its prerogatives and allowing the oil companies to automatically increase its prices every week is a betrayal of the people's trust and is tantamount to high treason.

Clearly, the Oil Deregulation Law is a dismal failure. Instead of promoting active competition, it only succeeded in increasing the membership of the cartel. In fact, in just over three years, the prices of oil products have doubled or increased by 100 percent.

While our leaders and Congress are debating whether to amend the Oil Deregulation Law or revive the Oil Price Stabilization Fund, alternative options must be put in place. If buying back Petron is a remote option, a new oil trading and distribution company must be organized to be funded from the capital contributions of oil consumers. This new company will aggressively compete with the cartel in the operation of depots, terminals and gasoline stations throughout the country using the facilities of Subic and SBMA. With this, the greedy cartel of the oil companies will no longer enjoy the protection and impunity being provided by the useless Oil Deregulation Law.

It is also high time for government to fast-track its efforts in promoting the use of coco diesel and other alternative gas to cut the tentacles of the octopus cartel.

—LORENZO S. SACDALAN,
executive director
and spokesperson,
Federation of Concerned
Organizations of Balut,
2448 Pinoy St., Balut,
Tondo, Manila

A national menace

DROWNED out by the noise on *jueteng* are the rumors that jueteng lords and their money have begun to dictate election results. If the rumors are to be believed, even my home province of Batangas is now controlled by a jueteng Mafia, sidelining the unexcelled nationalist legacy of the Rectos, the Laurels and the Levistes (Ka Sanoy) in the nation's history.

I am not going back to Batangas while this colossal anomaly prevails there.

But Batangas is not alone in the grip of jueteng's corrupting tentacles. Pampanga, Pangasinan, Baguio, Albay—in fact, almost all of Luzon—are in jueteng's immoral embrace. Just as America fell into the Mafia's control during the Prohibition, according to Mario Puzo's "The Godfather."

At this juncture, keeping jueteng illegal will reinforce and empower it, as it has done so over the years. Will legalizing it reverse the situation? I don't know. What is alarming is that although President Estrada paid the ultimate price for allegedly letting jueteng enter Malacañang's door, the suspicion—not yet a smoking gun—is that the Palace by the Pasig has not learned Erap's lesson. The way it looks, the jueteng loot in the billions of pesos, probably in tandem with drug money, may yet deliver this country into the grip of crime lords.

In short, jueteng has become truly a national menace because its lords are now in a position to convert their massive loot into power—the power to dictate election results.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Unit 301 Union Square
Condominium,
145 15th Ave.,
Cubao, Quezon City

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–Laura DiDio, The Yankee Group, April 2004
"Free Software", Unix, and Windows TCO Comparison

The Yankee Group, a global research and consulting firm, concluded that a significant switch to "free software" from Windows or Unix could cost three to four times as much without delivering tangibly better performance or business value. These findings are based on a non-sponsored worldwide survey of 1,000 IT administrators and C-level executives in midsized and large enterprises.

To get the full study, visit microsoft.com/getthefacts

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INQBOX

Question of the Week

Given the opportunity, I will:

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c) Remain in the Philippines permanently. Why?

Senders of d best 20 texts as publishd in Tuesday's **INQBOX** *wiL each receiv an "Inquirer Mug! U*

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Inquirer
menu

Congratulations
to the 4th PAMI Annual Awardees

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Top Referring Unit Manager
Top Referring Agency Manager

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Veronica S. Gonzalez

Sallentes-Gonzalez Associates
Top Referring Unit Managers
Top Referring Agency Managers

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Tan Associates
Top Referring Agency Manager

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SC Tan Associates
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Gan Associates
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Top Referring Unit Manager, Luzon

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MESSAGES

Once again, I greet the management staff and awardees of Philam Asset Management, Inc. (PAMI) as you hold your 4th Annual Awards Night.

I commend you for your tireless service to our people. Providing our countrymen with an alternative investment option expands their menu of choices for their savings. Undoubtedly, you contribute to our financial strength by providing a source of funds for productive economic activities.

May you continue to adhere to the best industry practices. Together, we can build a strong financial system that will support our quest to beat the odds towards development.

Again, congratulations to the awardees and Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL - ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

We, at the Securities and Exchange Commission, are delighted to note that sales achievement awards for 2004 still do happen, despite what others said of a very challenging, if not a difficult, year. The outstanding sales awardees of Philam Asset Management, Inc., should, therefore, be doubly congratulated for their remarkable achievement!

Moreover, sales achievement awards as what PAMI conducts, are also viewed by the Commission as another notch in our capital market development efforts. Sales agents like you, who are on the frontlines of our capital market encouraging our people to put their savings in long-term placements, help to spark economic opportunity and economic growth. If not for your efforts, the economy would be hard pressed to gather domestic funds and rely more on foreign sources in financing its investment activities.

Truly, luck could not be the reason for the topnotch performance of the awardees in 2004; it was their integrity, pro-activity, teamwork and professionalism. We, at the Commission, are confident that this progress will continue and be attained by all sales agents who make these work values as their beacons.

FE B. BARIN
Chairperson
Securities and Exchange Commission

Warm congratulations to the 2004 PAMI Awardees!

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Philam Asset Management, Inc., allow me to convey our thanks for having shown great support for PAMI in 2004.

As more and more Filipinos commit themselves to personal wealth management, your expertise in mutual funds will be invaluable to clients. I urge you to involve yourselves in learning programs that will help you expand your knowledge and skill in financial planning. In this way, you will continue to be the preferred consultants for investing, planning and insuring of your clients.

Congratulations for your great work in 2004, may you reap even greater success in 2005.

JOSE CUISIA, JR.
Chairman,
PhilAm Asset Management, Inc.

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'Jueteng' funding NPA, says general

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Southeast Asia's longest-running rebellion, by the Communist Party of the Philippines and the operations of its armed wing, the New People's Army, are financed by payola from jueteng and cockfights, a top Army official said.

Maj. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, said the information had been confirmed from documents seized in a raid on an NPA safe house in Barangay San Carlos in Mexico, Pampanga, on June 1.

The collection from jueteng and cockfights that goes to the rebels reached P100,000 a year in Pampanga alone, Tolentino said in a telephone interview on Tuesday.

He said the information also verified the policy of the CPP-NPA to collect money from illegal gambling.

Asked how long the supposed policy had been going on, he said: "It's been around quite long. It's been going on for years."

Corruption

The jueteng payoffs, Tolentino said, had "corrupted" the leadership and the ranks of the NPA, citing an incident in Aurora where a rebel was killed after he supposedly questioned alleged missing funds.

At least two CPP-NPA sources denied that such a policy existed. One said the "rectification movement" that began in Central Luzon in 1997 removed gambling and logging as sources of revolutionary taxes.

In a statement, Tolentino said a financial report, dated Jan. 28 and written on a yellow pad paper, detailed the fund sources, projected collections and projected expenses of the NPA southeastern front in Pampanga, tagged as the second most active base of rebels operating in Central Luzon.

Monthly take

Tolentino said the documents showed that the front, led by Alvin Salas alias Onie and Arnold, collected P4,000 monthly in jueteng payola through a certain Darvo.

Tolentino said Darvo got the money from a man called "Kamatis" in Sta. Ana town.

At least P2,400 a month is received from jueteng operations in Mexico from a certain Tony by one AJ. The Mexico cockpit arena puts in P1,700 monthly through a certain Ipe, Tolentino said.

The schedule of collection of jueteng payola is every 15th and 30th of the month in Sta. Ana and on the 5th and 25th of the month in Mexico.

Other sources

Also in Pampanga, rebels collect P3 million yearly from "varied extortion activities" from fishpond owners and other businesses, Tolentino said.

The money ranges from P5,000 to P60,000 yearly. The names of three people, three fishpond owners and six businessmen figured out in the list, Tolentino said.

He said the rebels also impose a P45-tax for every truckload of sand hauled out of a quarry site in Barangay San Juan, Mexico.

Jueteng was thrust into the limelight again following allegations that close relatives of President Macapagal-Arroyo were receiving protection money from gambling lords.

A crusade against illegal gambling, led by Archbishop Oscar Cruz, has brought witnesses to a Senate investigation that is currently looking into the involvement of top government and police officials in the protection racket. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Benguet execs plan suit vs Australian firm

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The provincial government is planning to sue an Australian firm and a Filipino company engaged in potato trading for possible violation of local quarantine laws.

Board Member John Kim, chair of the provincial board's committee on agriculture, urged Gov. Borromeo Melchor on Monday to study the filing of civil and criminal suits against Liwayway Marketing Corp., a Filipino-owned vegetable importer, and Shin Green Fresh, a potato exporter based in Australia.

Kim said his reports showed that Liwayway imported 350 metric tons of potatoes last year from Shin Green Fresh, which, he noted, is not a duly licensed business entity in Australia.

This violates the Philippines' quarantine laws, which require importers to transact business only with authorized trading firms, Kim said.

The Office of Fair Trading under Australia's Department of Commerce informed Kim recently that Shin Green Fresh is not a registered company.

Anne Cotter, assistant customer service officer for the Farm Trading Commissioner, wrote Kim that under Australian laws, only registered companies are allowed to engage in business.

Cotter asked Kim to provide her office information on Shin Green's activities in the Philippines so her office could start an investigation.

Kim said a search on the Australian Securities and Investment Commission website in the Internet revealed that Shin Green Fresh is an "unknown" entity and that information as to its place of business is "unavailable."

Shin Green Fresh had listed its business address as Post Office Box 1233, Baulkham Hills, New South Wales, 2153 Australia.

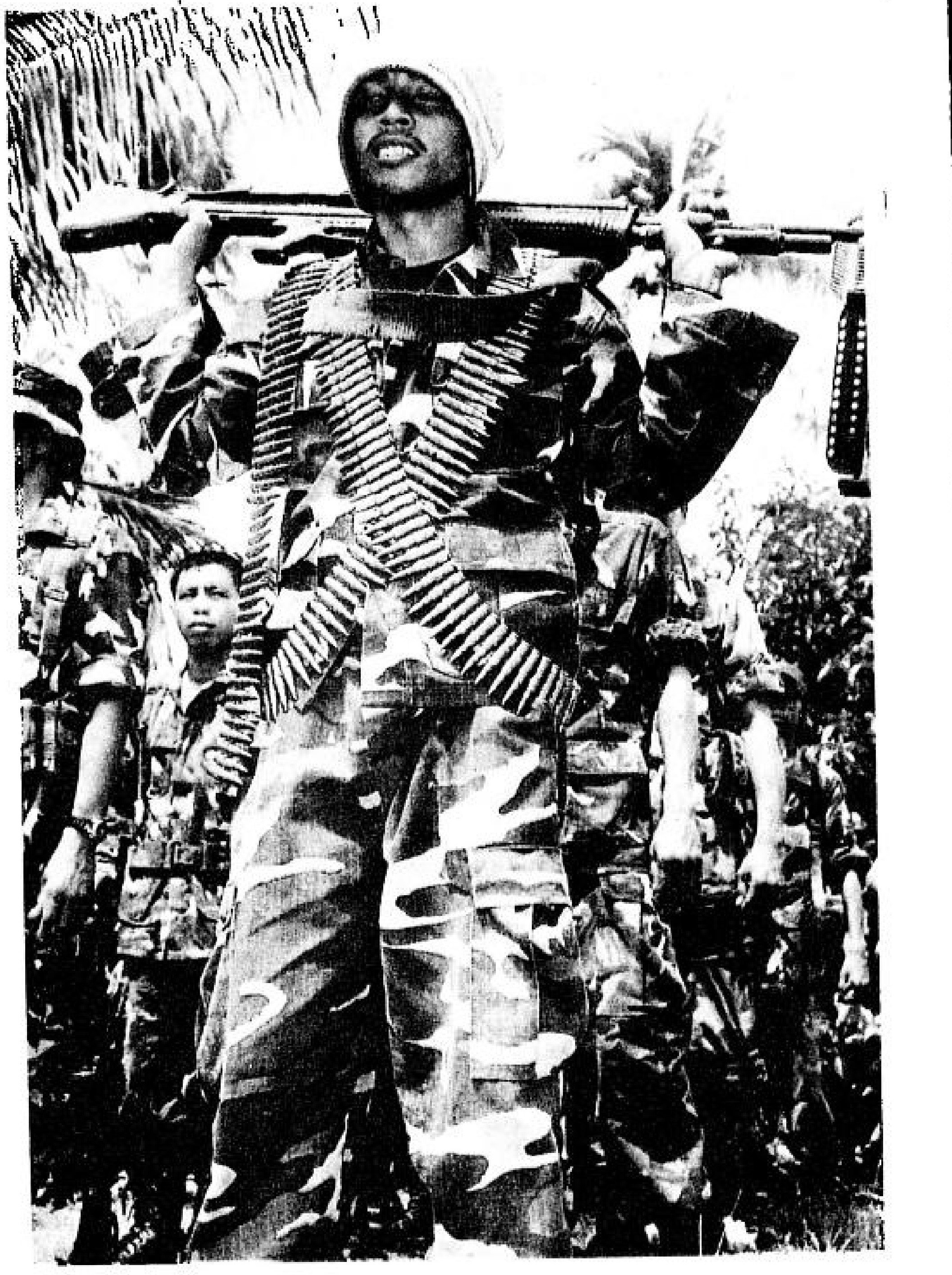
Kim said the Bureau of Plant Industry issued seven import permits to Liwayway in January 2004 that allowed the entry of seven shipments of potatoes from Australia through Shin Green Fresh.

The permits were signed by then Bureau of Plant Industry Director Hernani Golez after Luben Marasigan, chief of the bureau's plant quarantine service, recommended the approval of the importation.

The permits showed that the potatoes were supposed to be brought to Imus, Cavite.

Kim said Liwayway should not import potatoes from foreign exporters that do not have the business license to operate in their own country.

"The name of the exporter appearing in the import permits might be fake and Liwayway must be asked to explain," he said. *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



FULL BATTLE GEAR
A guerrilla of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front stretches his back with his machine gun during a morning assembly June 4 inside Camp Darapanan in Maguindanao. The MILF denied it was coddling or training foreign terrorists in their camp. AP

2 men shoot, kill Dumaguete treasurer in front of home

By Alex V. Pal
and Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Two hooded men shot and killed acting city treasurer Erlinda Tumongha as she alighted from a tricycle in front of her home in Barangay Taclobo on Monday afternoon.

Tumongha, 62, died on the spot after one of the two unidentified men on board a motorcycle pumped two bullets into the back of her head.

The death of Tumongha, the first Dumaguete official to be murdered, puzzled police and city officials as she had no known enemy. Tumongha was preparing her retirement papers for her 63rd birthday in December.

Mayor Agustin Perdices described the killing as "very sad," saying he did not know of any transaction at City Hall whereby someone would want to kill Tumongha because of her work as city treasurer.

"In the next few days we should get information whether someone was mad at her or something," he added.

But he said the initial theory was that the perpetrators were hired killers. "They were waiting for her and as soon as she alighted from the tricycle, they shot her," the mayor said.

Tumongha arrived from the office and was about to enter the gate of her house at about 5:30 p.m. when the assailant shot her, said Chief Insp. Manuel Hidalgo, Dumaguete police chief.

He said Crusaldo Tumongha, the victim's husband, told police investigators that he was inside the house when he heard a burst of gunfire.

According to Hidalgo, Crusaldo saw the gunman board a waiting black Honda Dream motorcycle driven by a companion and then speed off.

As Crusaldo was about to attend to his wounded wife, the suspects went back and pointed a gun at him, prompting him to flee into the house.

Then he heard another gunfire, apparently meant to finish off his wife.

Some residents, however, told the INQUIRER that the Tumongha was shot in front of her husband who was sitting by the gate when it happened.

When police arrived at the scene minutes after the shooting, they found the body of Tumongha lying in front of the gate.

The police brought the body to the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital where she was officially pronounced dead.

Hidalgo said that when the shooting took place, there were some people around the area and some vehicles were passing by.

He said they had questioned some witnesses who saw the shooting and obtained a description of the suspects and their motorcycle.

Cop defects to communist guerrillas

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—An officer of the Criminal Investigation Detection Group (CIDG) on Negros Island has defected to the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People Army (CPP-NPA), claiming that he was a victim of injustice after he was convicted of a crime he did not commit.

SPO2 Joel Escobido Geollegue, 49, former deputy provincial officer of the 701st CIDG based in Negros Oriental, was presented to the media on Sunday by a platoon-sized force of the CPP-NPA Boy Gatmaitan Command somewhere in southern Negros.

In a statement released by Liga Journalista News Service, Geollegue said he defected to the CPP-NPA because he believed the underground had a "higher correct sense of justice than the corrupt rotten government I served for 28 years."

"I am a victim of injustice. I was framed up for a crime I did not commit, and there is no foreseeable justice in my case," said Geollegue who wore his blue polo shirt uniform of the CIDG during the news conference.

He said he considered retired Brig. Gen. Raymundo Jarque his inspiration in making his decision.

Jarque joined the CPP-NPA in the 1990s after being accused of robbery by a Negrense businessman whom he said were trumped up charges. He later became consultant of the National Democratic Front.

Like Jarque, Geollegue decided to defect in April, a month after the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Regional Trial Court in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental that found him guilty of robbery hold-up and sentenced him to six years imprisonment.

The policeman claimed he had nothing to do with the group that robbed Terry Lim in 1993 at Crossing Relis, Barangay Carabalan, Himamaylan.

At the time Lim was robbed, Geollegue said he was in San Carlos City in Negros Occidental, investigating a car theft.

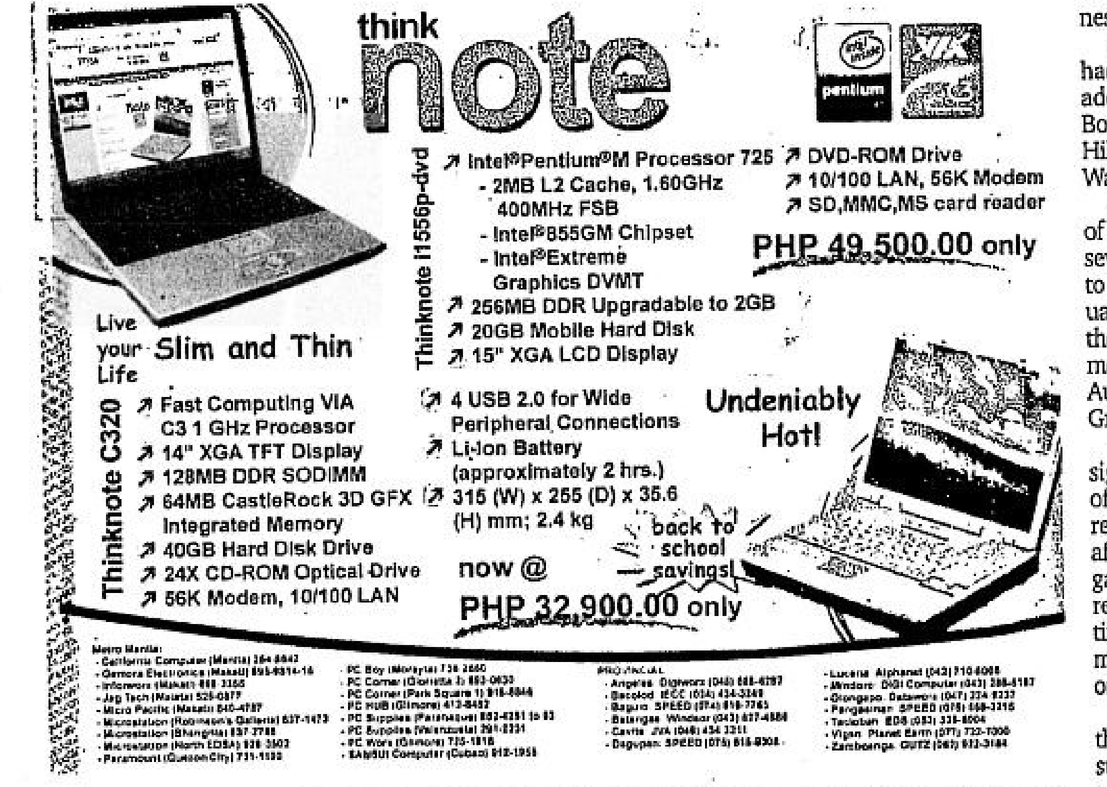
He said he believed that two policemen implicated him in the case because he exposed their illegal drug protection activities to the CIDG headquarters.

Geollegue said his case dragged at the lower court for 10 years. In 2003, the decision convicting him of the crime was handed down, prompting him to file an appeal before the Court of Appeals.

When his appeal was denied, he elevated his case to the Supreme Court, which later upheld the lower court's decision.

"I have lost my trust in the government's justice system. I have also doubted the integrity and sincerity of my colleagues, officials and the higher command in the service," he said.

Senior Insp. Herman Mallari, CIDG chief in Negros Oriental, said Geollegue had not been reporting for work a week and would be marked absent without leave or AWOL.



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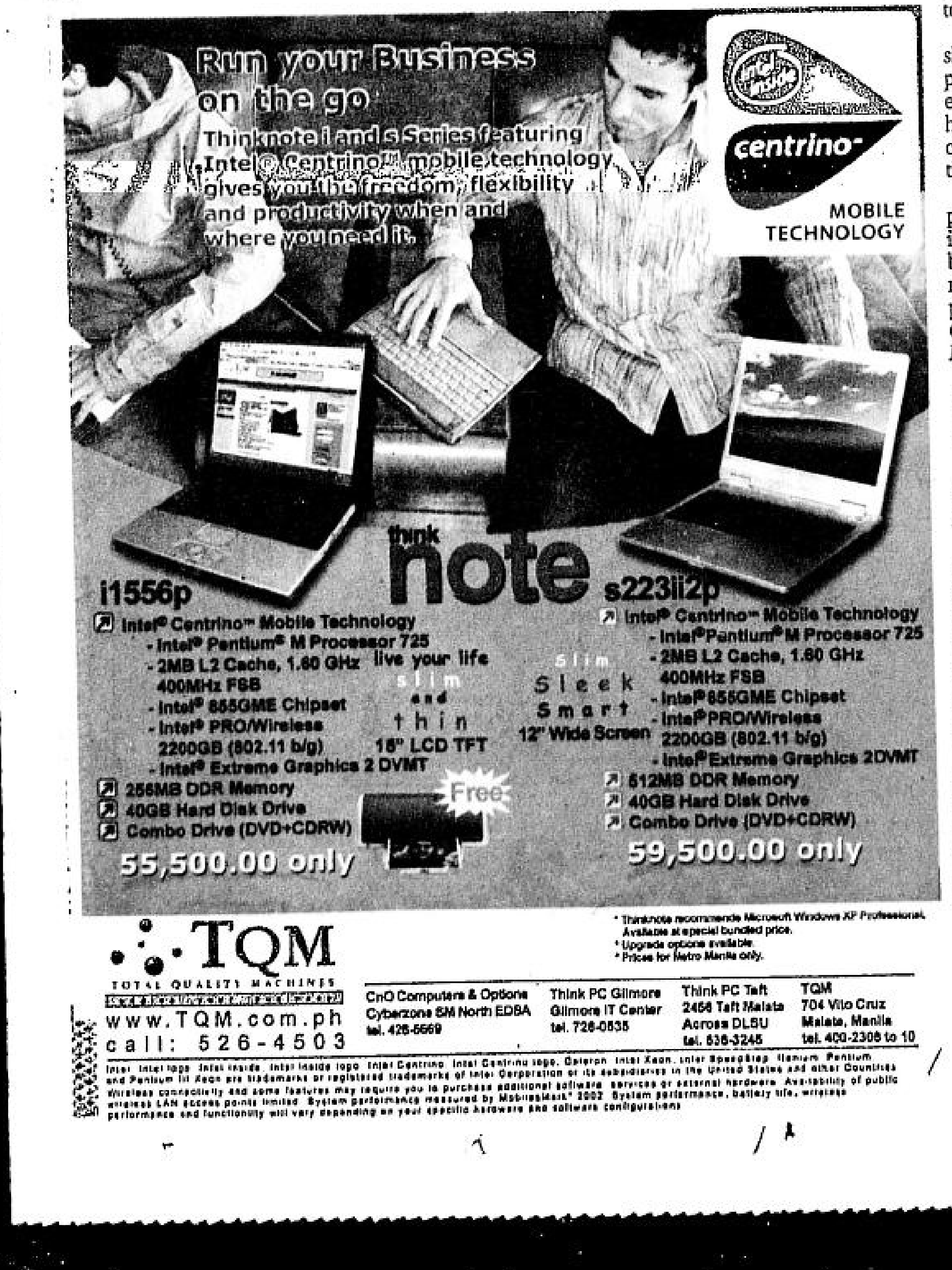

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Cordillera youths retrace roots

By Desiree Caluza
Baguio City

(FROM left, first row) Francis Gerard Alipio, Jennifer Godio, Reuben Muni, (from left, second row) JP Alipio and Clint Bangaan have walked on the path that their Cordillera ancestors took.

IT WAS a trek of a lifetime for five Cordillera youths, who retraced the route taken several centuries ago by the first wave of people to reach the mountain region.

For Joseph Paul Alipio, Clint Bangaan, Francis Gerard Alipio, Reuben Muni and Jennifer Godio, it was not an ordinary, leisurely climb. They formed the first group to hurdle the route of the original settlers since the Spanish period, and the 38-day journey allowed them to rediscover the historical and sacred sites of their ancestors.

Called the "Philippine Central Cordillera Traverse," the trek was sponsored by the National Geographic Expeditions Council. It started on April 1 in Barangay Dalupirip in Itogon, Benguet.

Historical trail

The members followed the so-called "historical trail" that spanned Benguet, Mt. Province and Ifugao.

They finished the last leg of the 350-km journey when they crossed Tirad Pass in Gregorio del Pilar town in Ilocos Sur on May 8.

Their skin burnt and bodies leaner from walking through mountains and crossing rivers, the members brought with them loads of information and memories of their encounters with the Cordillera villagers.

Joseph Paul Alipio, the team leader, said he left his job as a campaign officer of the Legal Rights and Natural Resource Center to fulfill his dream of trekking the mountain of his ancestors.

An Ibaloi, he traces his roots to La Trinidad, Benguet. He has worked with indigenous peoples and communities on environmental issues.

Alipio said that before they started the journey, each member was prayed upon by a *mansip-ok* (native priest) in a ritual in Barangay Ucab in Itogon. The priest butchered a chicken as an offering to the gods and prayed for a safe journey.

From Itogon, the trail led the team through Mt. Pulag in Kabayan, Benguet, the so-called playground of the gods.

Tirad Pass

They then took the trail to villages in Ifugao and Mt. Province.

Bangaan, researcher and local coordinator of the project, said they chose to end their journey at Tirad Pass, which lies near the border of Mt. Province, because it was an important trade route for the early Cordillerans. It was also considered the Ilocos gateway to the Cordillera.

"I had been involved in simple climbs before, but this one is very significant to me. I have not been in touch with my culture although I grew up [in the Cordillera]. My immediate family does not observe the traditional practices. I will only know about these through my relatives who still practice them," Alipio said.

Bangaan said he has to learn more about his roots although he grew up in the mountains.

A Kankanaey, whose ancestors were from Sagada and Besao towns in Mt. Province, Bangaan has been involved in various research projects with indigenous communities.

"What inspired me to join this trek was my love for my people. It's like finding a thing that belongs to your home," he said.

The other members have their own fields of interest: Francis Gerard Alipio is a nursing student; Muni, an instructor at the University of the Philippines Baguio; and Godio, a researcher.

Immersion

The members stayed with villagers in every leg of their journey. By immersing themselves in the communities, they realized that people in the most remote villages were happy living with the most basic of needs.

"What is happening there was so different from [things in urban centers where we grew up]. We learned to live with basics, like food, clothing and shelter. When you are in the city, things that you do not need tend to become your need," Alipio said.

Most villagers allowed them to document their rituals.

"We confirmed that many rituals were still being practiced, but some had been altered to adapt with changes and due to economics. Some are now more modified but the rituals' essential [components] are still there," Muni said.

One of the rituals that they witnessed was the mass wedding called the *lupis* in Betwagan village in Sadanga, Mt. Province. It is practiced during summer in Mt. Province.

"When we were there, no date was set for any wedding, until a carabao fell into a river and died. The elders thought the carabao meat would just go to waste so they decided to hold the ritual that day for couples who wanted to get married. Five couples were wed that day," Muni said.

Cordillera rituals

Aside from documenting the rituals, environment and the people, Godio said the trek erased their prejudices.

"We were initially hesitant to proceed to Betwagan when we heard reports of an ongoing tribal war. But when we arrived there, the villagers accommodated us and they were very warm," she said.

The members said one of their most unforgettable experiences was their confrontation with government soldiers who mistook them for communist rebels in Quirino, Ilocos Sur.

Alipio said that when they crossed the Abra River on the 37th day of their journey, the soldiers, with their guns drawn, surrounded them and started asking questions.

Despite the exhaustion, strange encounters, sickness and minor accidents, the experience of exploring their ancestors' home was worth it, he said.

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A different kind of learning for these kids

By Donna Demetillo
La Trinidad, Benguet

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

A NEW breed of comic book superheroes will make meal times more interesting for children this school year.

A comic book that will be launched this month will be part of a souvenir package for children who will participate in an educational tour of The Master's Garden, a small organic farm in Barangay Wangal in La Trinidad, Benguet.

Children will also be given souvenir stickers of the heroes every time they visit the garden.

The story revolves around the character "Organic Kid" and his friends "Earl the Earthworm," "Lie the Ladybug," and microbes "Mike" and "Roby," and the environmental challenges they face while teaching children to care for the environment.

Children will be fed healthy snacks while at the farm to introduce them to the benefits of organic vegetables. They will also be given garden kits (soil, seeds, compost and pots) to take home and to complement the things they learn at the farm where they will be given hands on experience on organic farming.

The tour takes two to three hours to complete. Activities include a short lecture on the difference of organic and chemical farming, a visit to different chambers near the farm to explain the organic farming process, experiments on factors affecting plant life, a visit to the plant nursery, and a guided walk through the garden, among other things.

"Learning in a classroom can sometimes be very boring. Trips outside can be very enriching. The first batch of students we had was from the Baguio Achievers School and they were very fascinated. *Napakain sila ng* vegetables (They were enticed to eat vegetables)," said farm owner Pat Acosta.

Organic gardening

His family established the center for organic gardening in the absence of valuable information from schools regarding organic farming and its benefits.

To Acosta, this is essential not only to inform children but also instill in their impressionable minds a concern for the protection and preservation of the environment.

The Master's Garden not only caters to young minds but also to other farmers in nearby areas.

According to Acosta, many conventional farmers come to his farm to observe and learn his techniques. He has been giving organic gardening educational sessions to farmer leaders and various groups to explain what food should be and to attain environmental sustainability.

The farmer leaders, in turn, conduct echo seminars in their communities.

"It's really a love to garden. It has become my mission to find new techniques to help other farmers to move out of the pit they are in. In other countries, farmers are the richest, the ones with the most stable incomes. Here, it's the opposite. We need to rediscover how to make gardening profitable," said Acosta, who is also a consultant of the Department of Agriculture in the Cordillera.

The Master's Garden has been operating for four years now, but Acosta said it wasn't easy running the garden.

He found it challenging because even the DA could not seem to make organic gardening operationally viable and sustainable.

Salad bowl

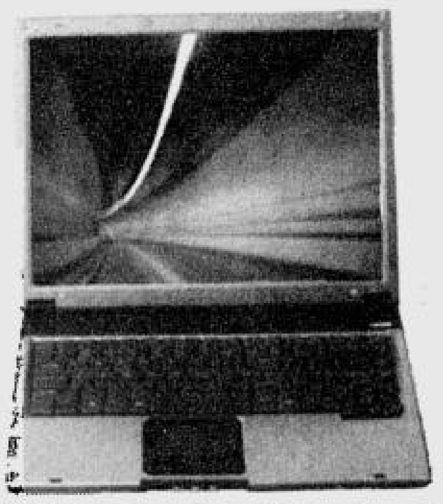
Four years later, the 3,000-square-meter farm continues to bloom. It has 22 varieties of lettuce growing in patches arranged in neat rows, the different shades of green broken only by vines crawling with red and yellow tomatoes. Here and there are patches of broccoli, cabbage, thyme, and other herbs.

The garden, in short, is a complete salad bowl.

Chances are, if you eat green salad in some of the famous restaurants in the city, you are most probably eating clean, pesticide-free vegetables.

Acosta is the main supplier of vegetables for the city's restaurants serving continental salads and dishes.

The Master's Garden yields an average of 75 kilograms of lettuce a week (to a high of 100 kg), which he sells in the market for P45 a kg, regardless of the season.



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Biggest drug raid in Metro

By DJ Yap

THE APARTMENT looked like any other home in the Romarosa Townhomes complex tucked in a sleepy neighborhood of Old Balara, Quezon City. On Monday night, a raid conducted by narcotics agents exposed Unit 13's dirty secret.

The raid on the two-story structure on Block 5, Luzon Avenue netted 1,600 kilos of suspected ephedrine, an ingredient for making methamphethamine hydrochloride, locally known as shabu.

Estimated to be worth millions, the drug haul was the biggest so far in Metro Manila this year, said Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force (Aidsotf) chief Ricardo de Leon.

The raid was covered by a search warrant issued by Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 87 Judge Fatima Asdala.

Agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Aidsotf and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency discovered some 30 sacks and 27 boxes of a white powdery substance, believed to be ephedrine, inside the unit.

But Chief Insp. Filipinas Papa, head of the Central Police District crime laboratory section, said it was still too early to tell if the substance was really ephedrine.

Each sack was estimated to weigh 25 kilos.

De Leon said they could not estimate the worth of the suspected ephedrine at this time, but added that it could reach P1 billion.

Although the initial weight estimate of the recovered substance was 1,605 kilos, De Leon said the exact figure was still being confirmed. One kilo of ephedrine is worth from P800,000 to P1 million, he said.

Police Supt. Gilbert Sosa of the CIDG said the house was being rented by suspected drug traders Ben and Wally Chua, who are believed to be brothers. Ben was also known as Ben Ang, while Wally used Wally Ang and Hung Ching Wei as aliases, police said.

An Aidsotf agent said Wally was arrested last Sunday after a buy-bust operation conducted by CIDG agents, also on Luzon Avenue. Ben is still at large.

The suspected ephedrine was found inside one of the rooms on the second floor of the unit. Police said the house had been under surveillance for several weeks before the raid.

Residents said they had no inkling the apartment was being used as an alleged shabu warehouse.

"We never suspected anything. The Chuas seemed like regular folks," said Simeon Flores, president of the Romarosa homeowners' association.

13-year-old girl's finger burned in gang hazing rites

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE MOTHER of a 13-year-old student from an exclusive girl's school in Caloocan City filed physical injury charges yesterday against her daughter's friends who allegedly burned her finger as part of their group's initiation rites.

Police said the burning of the girl's right thumb as a prerequisite for joining the group could be considered as a form of hazing.

"The burnt thumb served as part of a member's rites of passage to Magic 5," a police investigator said.

Police said hazing was being used by certain groups to test a neophyte's sincerity in applying for membership.

Magic 5 is reportedly composed of students from various exclusive high schools in the city, police said.

But a school official interviewed by the INQUIRER denied the existence of such a group. The official promised to look into the case.

"These activities are prohibited, but we would inform the police just the same if anything comes up," the school official said.

Investigators said that the group's recruitment started before the opening of classes.

Last May 30 at about 7:30 p.m., the high school freshman asked permission from her parents to attend a meeting with her friends.

But the gathering, police said, turned out to be a hazing session for would-be members of the group.

Police said the victim backed out, but one of the group members held her hand and burned her finger.

Apart from physical injuries, the group members could also be charged for violating the Anti-Hazing Law.

Luisa A. Raposa; 78

LUISA A. Raposa passed away yesterday in Legazpi City at the age of 78.

She is survived by her children Earl, Marilyn, Enrique Jr. and Gil Dennis; son-in-law Ramon; daughters-in-law Lourdes and Emerita, and grandchildren Ma. Theresa, Janet May, Paul Michael, Mary Jocelyn, Zarah Mae, Adeline Gay, Enrique III and Mary Lou.

Her body lies at the Holy Family Chapel, Cruzada, Legazpi City.

Interment will be at 3 p.m., June 10, at the Pristine Memorial Gardens, Bonot, Legazpi City after a Mass at 2 p.m.

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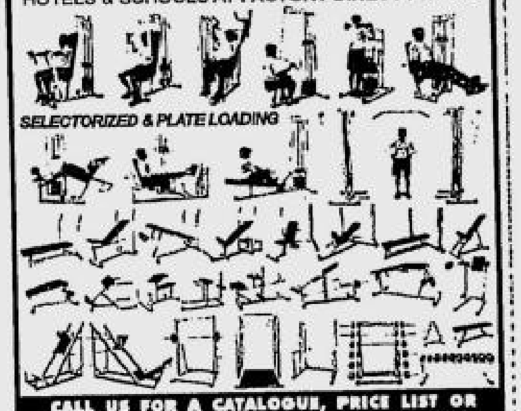

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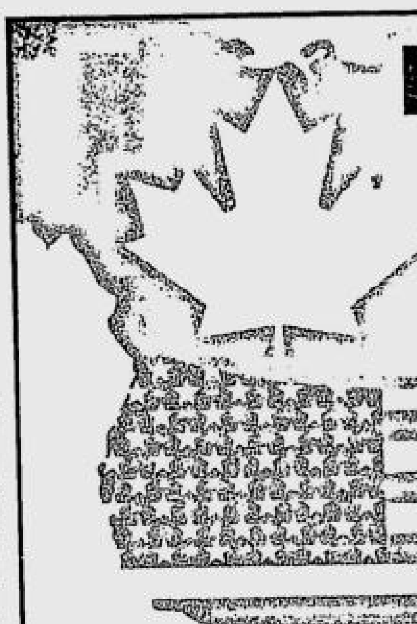

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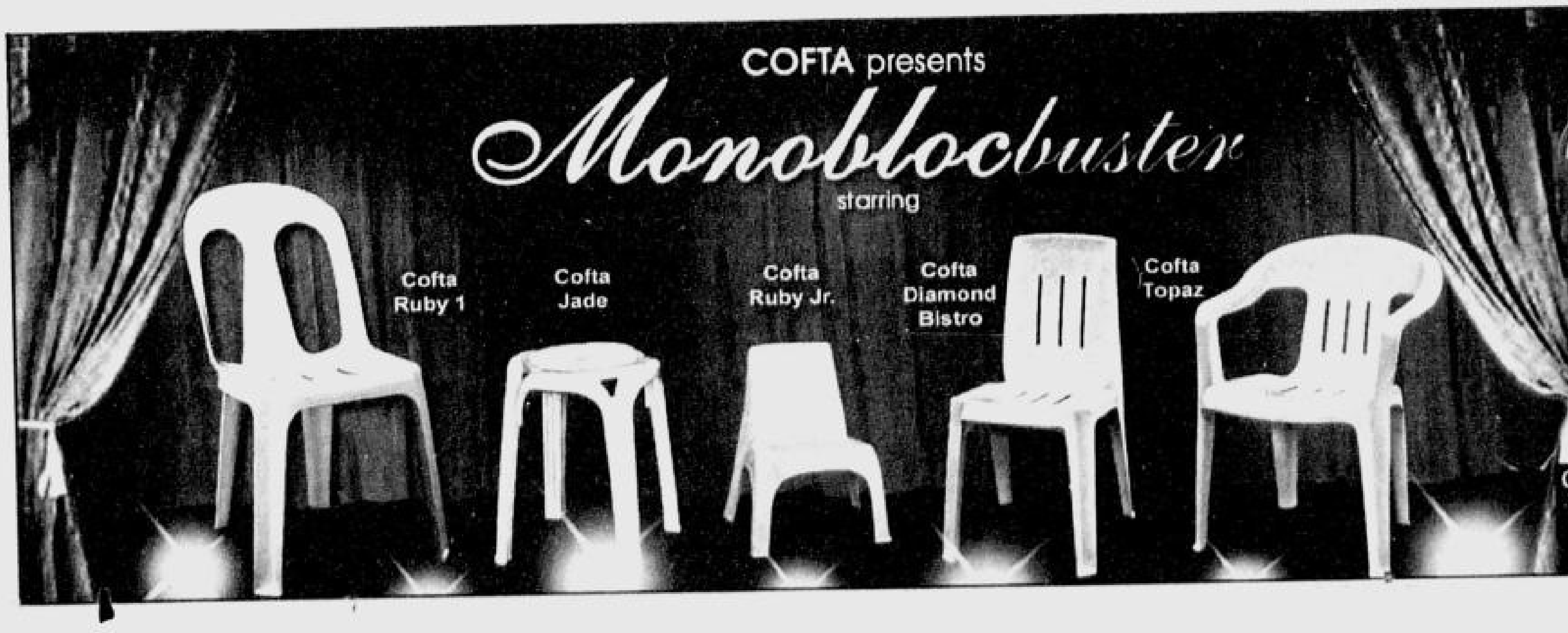

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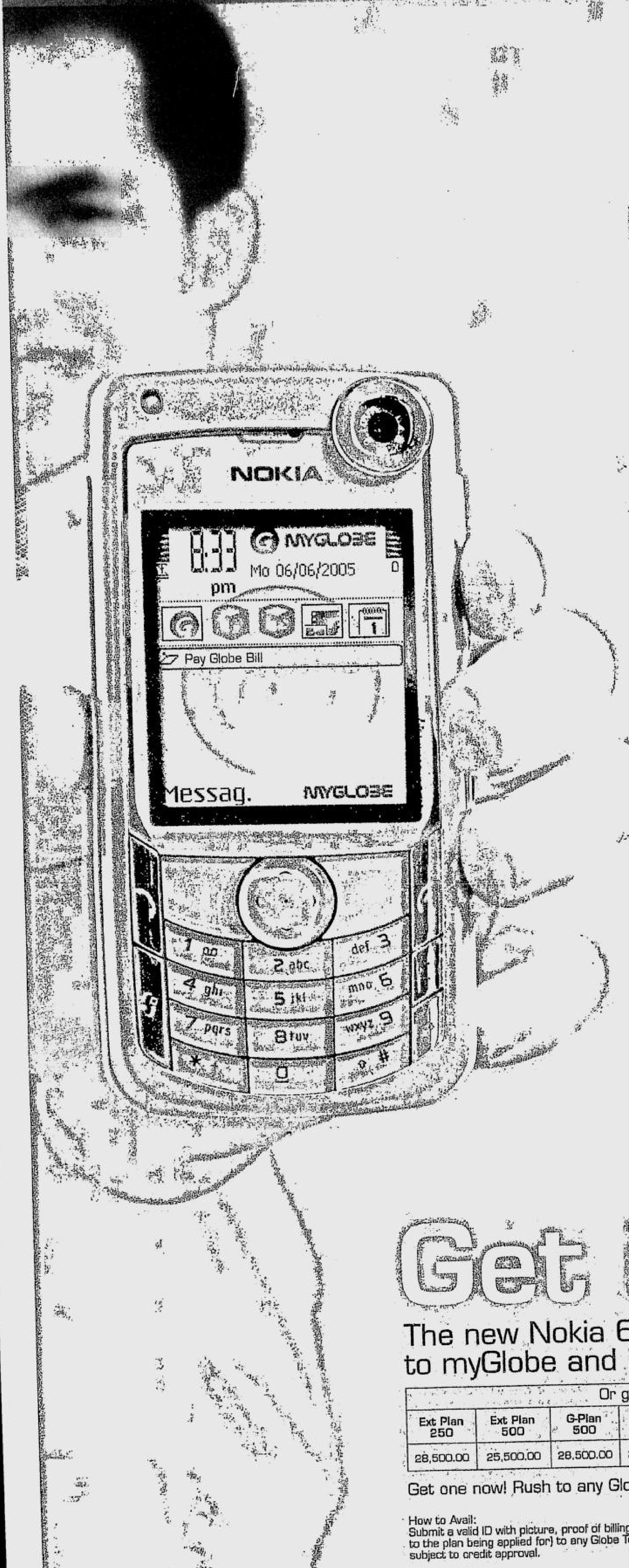
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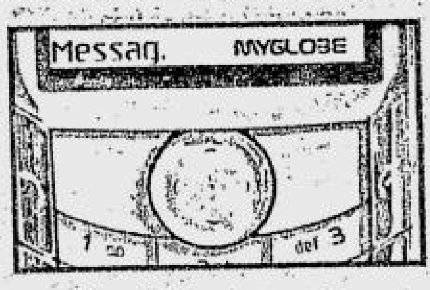
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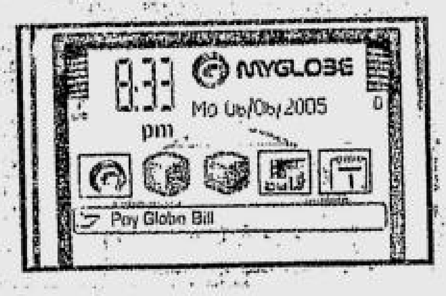
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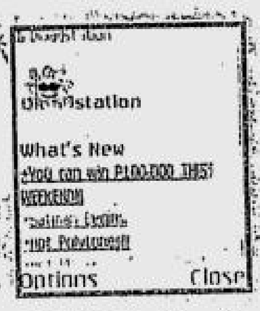
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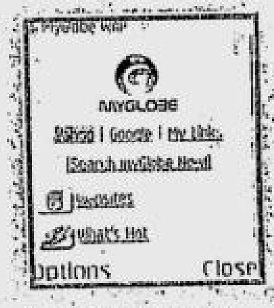
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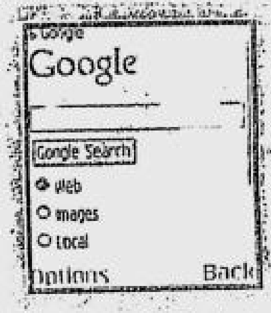
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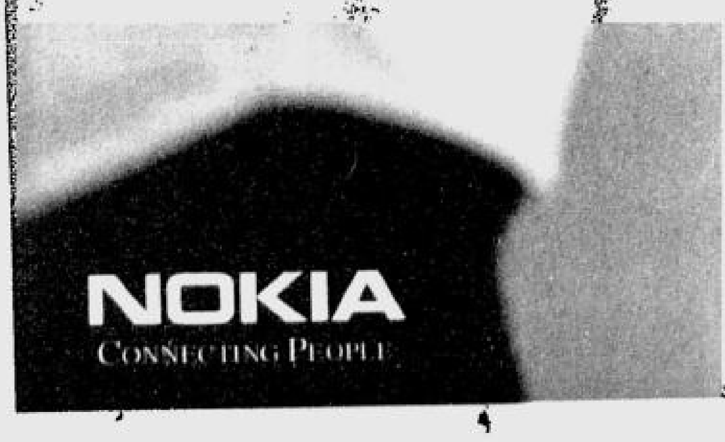
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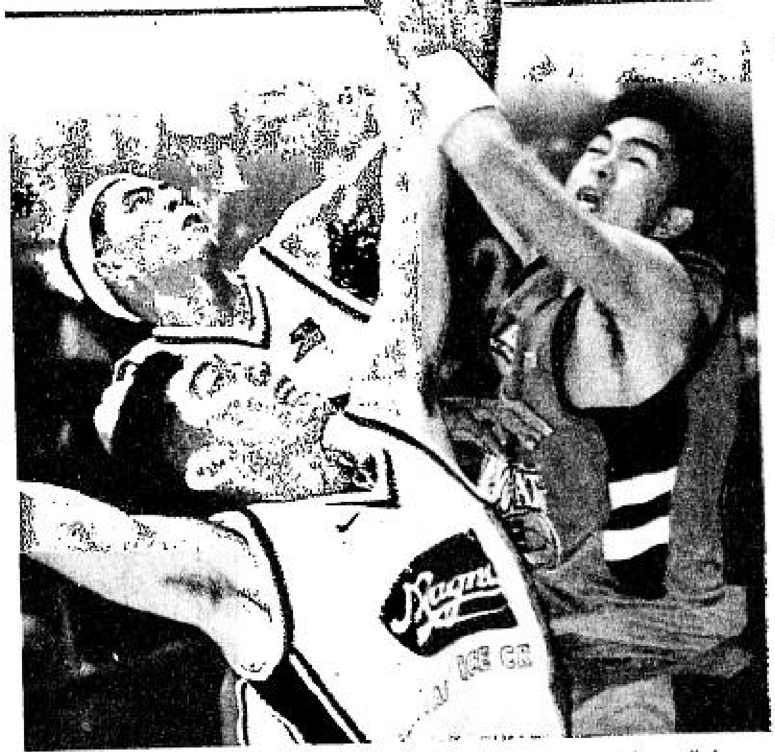

THE REBOUND battle turns into a tangle of arms among Magnolia's Arwind Santos and RJ Rizada and Welcoat's Jay-Ar Reyes. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Washington powers Welcoat ride to finals

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE REAL Anthony Washington finally showed up to lead Welcoat Paints to another finals showdown against the Montaña Jewels.

Looking out of sync in the semifinal series, Washington delivered 20 points and 13 rebounds as the Paint Masters sneaked past Magnolia Ice Cream, 70-67, in the PBL Unity Cup yesterday at the Pasig Sports Center.

Leo Najorda also recovered from his offensive troubles and helped Welcoat seal the championship berth with his 13 points.

"I challenged Washington to contain (Kelly) Williams," said coach Caloy Garcia after the Paint Masters booked their fourth straight finals appearance. "I told him to prove that he's a better player than Williams and he's the MVP for us."

Williams finished with 10 points and 14 rebounds, his lowest production in nine games.

"All the players wanted to go back to the finals," added Garcia after the Paint Masters foiled the Wizard's bid to defend their title. "Eugene (Tan) and (Erwin) Sta. Maria also stepped up for us."

The Paint Masters were confidently headed for the win, 70-63, in the last 39.3 seconds, but crucial turnovers allowed the Wizards to pull

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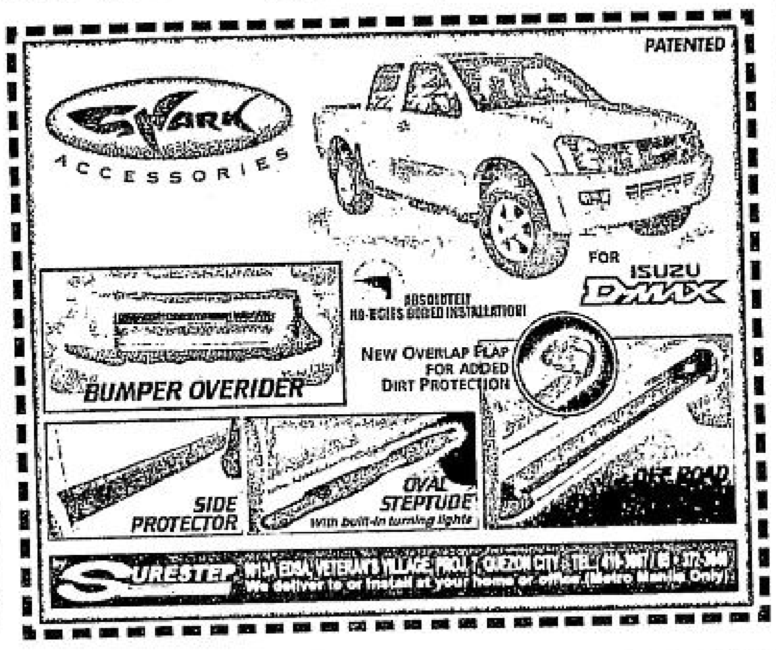

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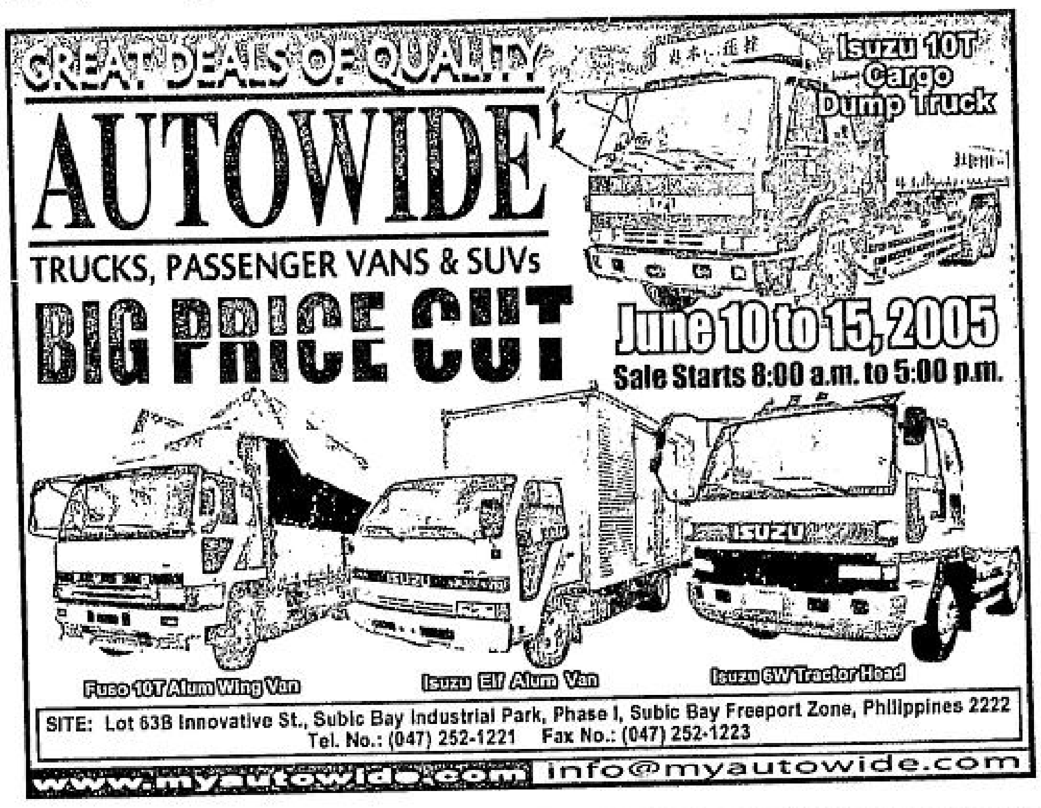

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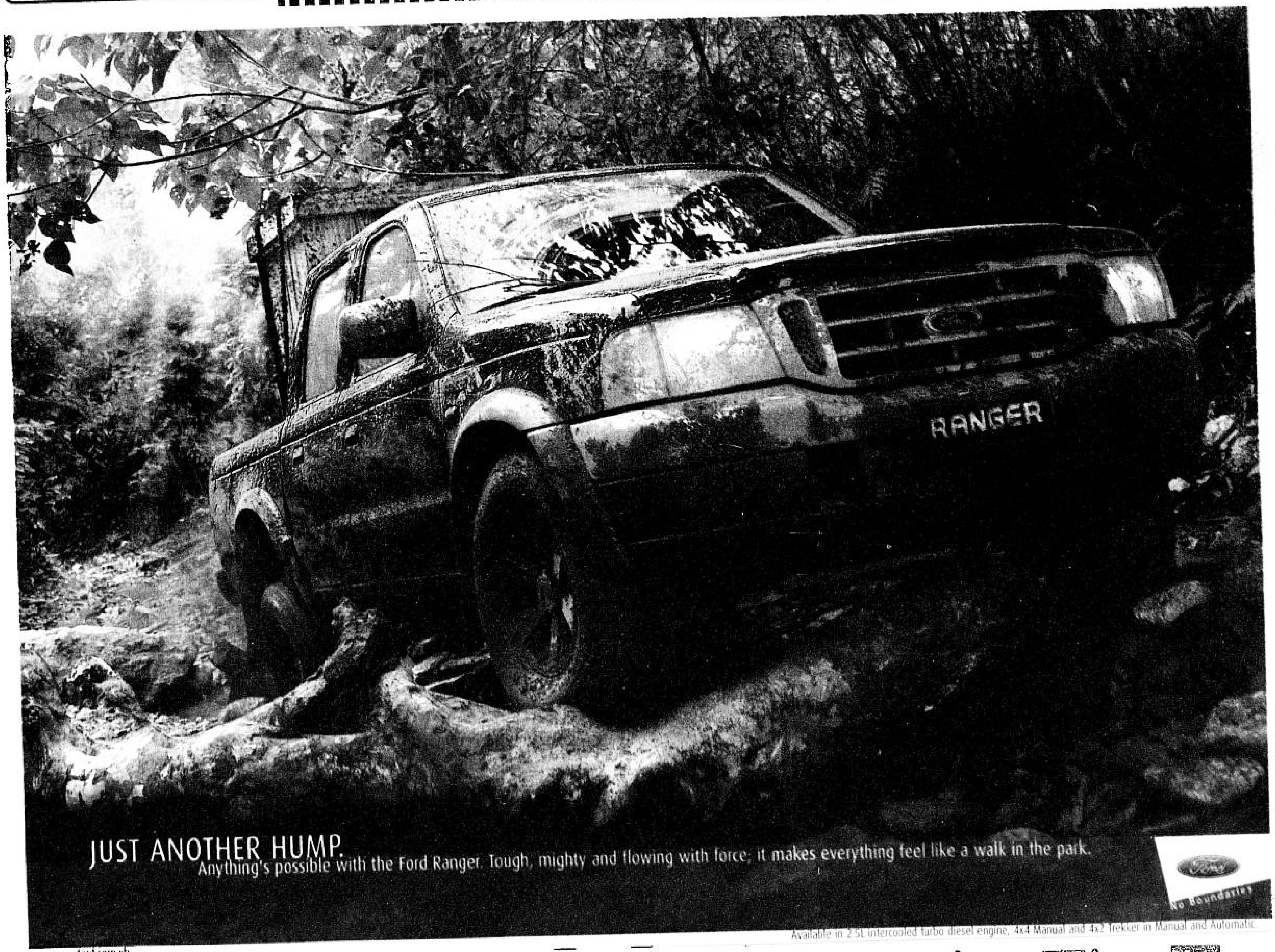

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RP 'sepak' bets seize 2 golds

THE PHILIPPINES on the attack in regu.

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The Philippines captured two gold medals on the penultimate day Monday of the International Invitational Sepak Takraw Championships-2nd Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn Cup here.

The golds, two of six staked in the tournament, came from Hagedorn's own Philippines-A women's squad and the Manila-based Philippines-B men's team.

The Filipinos nailed the golds in the hoop event where five players shoot or kick the takraw into three hoops suspended in the air, with each goal worth 10 points, over a 15-minute period.

"This is something we should all be proud of," said Hagedorn, the country's pioneer in sports tourism. "Our efforts are now bearing fruits."

Philippine teams also clinched the silver medals in the men and women's hoop of the tournament organized by the Philippine Amateur Sepak Takraw Association and backed by Hagedorn and the city government of Puerto Princesa in preparation for the Southeast Asian Games in November.

Puerto Princesa's Rhea Padrigo, Gelyn Evora, Irene Apdon, Josefina Maat, Sarah Catain and Rose Ann Soringa made seven cross jump kicks to best Philippines-B made up of Deseree Autor, Eden Bernardo, Gelleni Navarro, Karah Elizabeth Festin, Jean Rose Babelonia and Lannibelle Alipan and the Vietnam squad in the tiebreak for the gold medal. All three teams tied in regulation with 170 points.

The Philippines-B men's team bagged the gold medal over Puerto Princesa's Philippines A and another Vietnam squad.

Pistons rally to nip Heat, forge title duel vs Spurs

MIAMI—Larry Brown walked through the front door of the Detroit Pistons' packed locker room, scanning the celebration with his eyes aglow and his smile wide.

"Where are my guys?" Brown asked before spotting Lindsey Hunter and telling him he loved him, then working his way to Tayshaun Prince and reaching in for a hand slap.

"That's what we're all about," Brown said.

The pressure of Game 7 didn't faze the defending champions—not in the slightest.

In a deciding game that stayed close the entire 48 minutes, the Detroit Pistons summoned their experience and played with calmness and poise down the stretch to defeat the Miami Heat, 88-82, Monday in the final game of the Eastern Conference finals.

Now, it's back to the NBA Finals for the team often dismissed as a fluke champion—a disparaging label if there ever was one, but one the Pistons can shake with four wins against the San Antonio Spurs.

Dwyane Wade played for Miami after missing Game 6 because of a rib muscle injury, but he was only good for brief stretches. He finished with 20 points but didn't score over the final 15 minutes.

"I couldn't be as athletic as I wanted to be, but I did what I could do," Wade said.

Richard Hamilton scored 22 points, Rasheed Wallace added 20—including two foul shots that put Detroit ahead for good with 1:26 remaining—and the Pistons closed the game with a 10-3 run to hand Miami yet another heartbreaking Game 7 loss on its home floor.

"I'm thrilled," Hamilton said. "It's like a dream come true. To get a chance to play for my second championship at 27, it's a great feeling."

Shaquille O'Neal led Miami with 27 points, but the Heat faltered offensively in the final two minutes—with Wade the biggest culprit when he forced up a 20-footer that missed badly with 1:13 left.

Wallace followed with a putback of Prince's miss to make it 82-79, and Detroit went 6-for-6 from the foul line—pressure, what pressure?—the rest of the way.

"From a basketball sense, I don't think I've ever been more disappointed," Heat coach Stan van Gundy said. "I'm not disappointed in my players. I'm just extremely disappointed with the result.

"You fight all year to get this seventh game at home. To not be able to come through with a 7-point lead in the fourth quarter, I don't know. It's going to be months going over that, thinking about that and going over every play." Wade scored 12 points in the third quarter, but he was wincing in pain in the game's final minutes. His basket with 3:10 left in the third quarter was his last of the night.

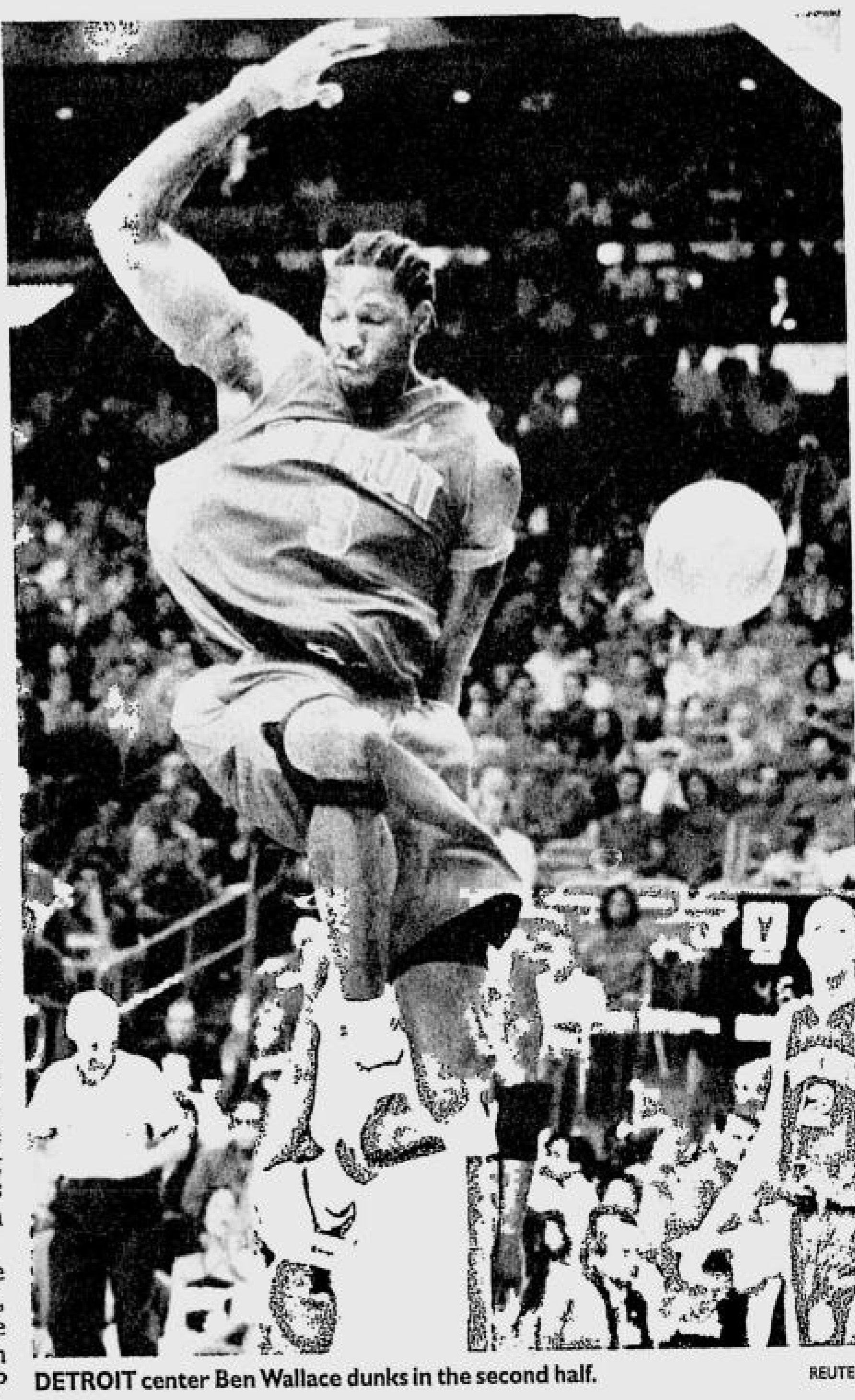
Detroit got 18 points from Chauncey Billups and 13 from Prince, proving again that a team effort can be more than enough to defeat two superstars. That's what the Pistons did against O'Neal and Kobe Bryant in the NBA Finals last year, and that's what they did against O'Neal and Wade, too.

"This is validation for us," Billups said. "We won the championship last year and people didn't give us much of a chance. I can understand. They have two superstars and they dominated the East all season.

"But we have so many big guys. I think our experience, being in these situations before, being in the foxhole before, helped us."

Wade was noticeably slow during the game's first few minutes, laboring as he ran at half-speed and missing his first three shots. There was a brief burst midway through the first quarter when Wade started to look more like himself, sprinting downcourt and feeding an alley-oop pass to O'Neal, then hitting a 3-pointer for a 17-9 lead.

"Anybody in my situation would do the same thing, try to gut it out," said Wade, who took a painkilling injection before the game. "It came down to the end, them making plays. And we didn't." *AP, AFP*



DETROIT center Ben Wallace dunks in the second half. REUTERS

W'ngton powers Welcoat

From page A21

within 70-67, with only 17.7 ticks left.

The Wizards had a chance to force an extra period, but Jason Misolas missed a three-pointer at the buzzer.

Welcoat, which is trooping to its 11th finals series since joining the league in 1996, led by as many as 13 points, 31-18, in the second quarter.

Led by Arwind Santos, the Wizards steadily narrowed the gap, 42-39, in the third period. But Sta. Maria, who chipped in 12 points, ignited the offense to keep the Paint Masters on top, 49-45.

The Wizards later sank their next six free throws to tie the game, 51-51, before Najorda answered with a triple followed by a jumper to push Welcoat ahead, 56-51.

The scores:

WELCOAT 70—Washington 20, Najorda 13, Tan 12, Sta. Maria 12, Ortiguerra 5, Tangkay 4, Reyes 4, Dy 0, Coching 0, Orbeta 0.

MAGNOLIA 67—Miranda 17, Santos 16, Calil 14, Williams 10, Rañesos 8, Misolas 2, Islp 0, Co 0, Rizada 0, Jones 0, Chan 0.

Quarters: 24-18, 38-28, 56-51, 70-67.

Romel denies romantic link with Kris

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

I THOUGHT it was the best time to pop the question I've long wanted to ask cager Romel Adducul personally but never had the chance to.

Unintentionally, I found myself seated next to the cager, who has been linked to game show host Kris Aquino, last Sunday during the closing rites of the 16th Fiba-Asia Champions Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

I didn't let him get away this time. I immediately delivered my opening lines: I just heard that Kris is getting married to Purefoods cager James Yap next year. She said she chose him over you and another guy."

Romel just smiled. Kept his lips puckered.

"Is there really nothing between the two of you?" I persisted.

"*Wala talaga* (Nothing really)," he said.

Might it be that Romel's constant denial was the main reason Kris struck his name out of her short list of matrimonial prospects? That is, if there was really one. I couldn't be too sure.

If she and James had actually made plans to marry. It could all be a publicity gimmick, you know.

* * *

A veteran internationalist, Romel dished out an outstanding performance in the recently concluded Fiba-Asia Champions Cup, earning hossanahs from the Pinoy basketball fan.

"I told you Romel would lead the RP team in this tournament," said basketball scholar Teddy Reynoso of Bulacan, Bulacan. "*Kabisado niya kasi ang* (He's used to) international play. Looks like he's not effective in the pro league but his style works well in international tourneys. He's the most internationally experienced among the RP players. Nothing beats experience."

Romel was the only Filipino voted into the mythical five of the Fiba Champions Cup.

* * *

Harbour Centre coach Tonichi Yturri, who was tagged by MacMac Cardona's agent, Mike Gonzalez, as the person responsible for the failure of the Portmasters to reach the semifinal round of the ongoing PBL Unity Cup, called us the other day, "to set the record straight."

According to Tonichi, what bothers him a lot is the question on the Portmasters' system which Mike G raised.

"How can he question the system when this is what we used to earn an 8-win, 3-loss record which was good enough to get us to first place? It is so easy for Mike to point an accusing finger," said Tonichi who couldn't comprehend how the performance of the team drastically changed overnight . . . for the worse.

"What I've noticed is that we ran away from the system in the last four games," Tonichi added. "For example, the number of assists was reduced in those four lost games, which meant that not everybody was touching the ball," he said.

Among all the Portmasters, Tonichi said MacMac paid the most fines for tardiness and was even sent home twice.

In fairness, though, most of the PBL habitués I talked with believe there was no hanky-panky involved in the Harbour Centre skid.

"*Masyado lang gigil si* MacMac, *tapos naging* individualistic *na ang laro nung ibang* key players (MacMac overdid it, and the other key players became too individualistic)," said a PBL insider.

* * *

Instead of meddling in the affairs of the other sports, perhaps Go Teng Kok should spend more time attending to matters in his own backyard.

Like chess for example, of which he is head, in addition to the Patafa, and which is right now in a state of chaos.

To seed or not to seed, that is the question which GTK should solve with Solomonic wisdom as soon as possible. Otherwise his chess body will go the way of the other sports he has dipped his fingers into. So much gold medals are at stake here.

Karma, they call it. There is such a process, you know.

* * *

The Talk 'N Text Phone Pals are scheduled to leave for Australia sometime soon to play a series of tune-up games against local teams there, in preparation for the crucial phases of the PBA Gran Matador Fiesta Cup.

TNT governor Ricky Vargas, back from a three-week vacation in New York, said PLDT head honcho Manny V. Pangilinan is also sending seven Ateneo cagers to Florida for training.

MVP is fully supporting the Ateneo Blue Eagles.

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INQUIRER

Alaska, SMB dispute semis berth tonight

THE FINAL piece of the wildcard puzzle will be known tonight when Alaska and San Miguel Beer dispute the other outright semifinal berth in the 2005 Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Beermen and the Aces, who finished with identical 11-7 win-loss records, clash in a 7 p.m. float-or-sink encounter to determine who will occupy the No. 2 seat a day before the playoffs begin.

Talk 'N Text has already cemented its grip on the top spot after finishing with a 12-6 record. The Phone Pals and the survivor of the Aces-Beermen knockout match advance to the best-of-five semifinals outright and skip the danger-filled wildcard phase and the quarterfinals.

But the Beermen, who ran over the Aces twice in the classification round, will have to make do with their top scorer sitting on the sidelines. Danny Seigle is again a doubtful starter for the Beermen after twisting an ankle a few weeks back.

Alaska is also nursing a handicap, having lost a reliable offensive operator in Brandon Cablay to injury.

SEIGLE: Still hurting

The absence of Seigle, however, will be more of a liability for the Beermen, who are hoping that reactivated import Chris Burgess can neutralize Alaska's Dickey Simpkins.

The loser secures the No. 3 spot and takes on the 10th-ranked Coca-Cola armed with a twice-to-beat edge in the next round. Sta. Lucia Realty (10-8), which wound up fourth, also secured the same edge when it battles No. 9 Shell (7-11)

The other wild card pairings pit the fifth-seeded FedEx Express (9-9) against No. 8 Purefoods TJ Hotdogs and sixth-ranked Red Bull (9-9) opposite defending champion and No. 7 Barangay Ginebra (8-10) in a best-of-three series.

The Kings have beefed up their roster, lifting Jayjay Helterbrand off the injured list and signing free agent Marlon Basco.

June Navarro

Top cockers vying in first Makati Coliseum derby

LEADING members of the National Cockers Association, Gentlemen's Cockers Association of the Philippines, and the Pasay Cockers Cockpit Association converge today for the inaugural derby at the Makati Coliseum, a 4-cocker organized by the Batangas Cockers and Breeders Association.

With 40 entries already listed and 80 fights scheduled, organizers pegged the starting time at 4 p.m.

The event is billed as a sneak preview of the World Slasher's Cup next week at the Araneta Coliseum.

The derby is just one of the events scheduled at the Makati Coliseum, which is managed by the WTJ Sports and Amusements Corp. headed by its president, Lito Orillaza and manager William Co.

Other events slated are a musical concert on June 25, the Shakey's V-League on July 4, a Puyat Sports billiards tourney in August and boxing cards to be announced soon.

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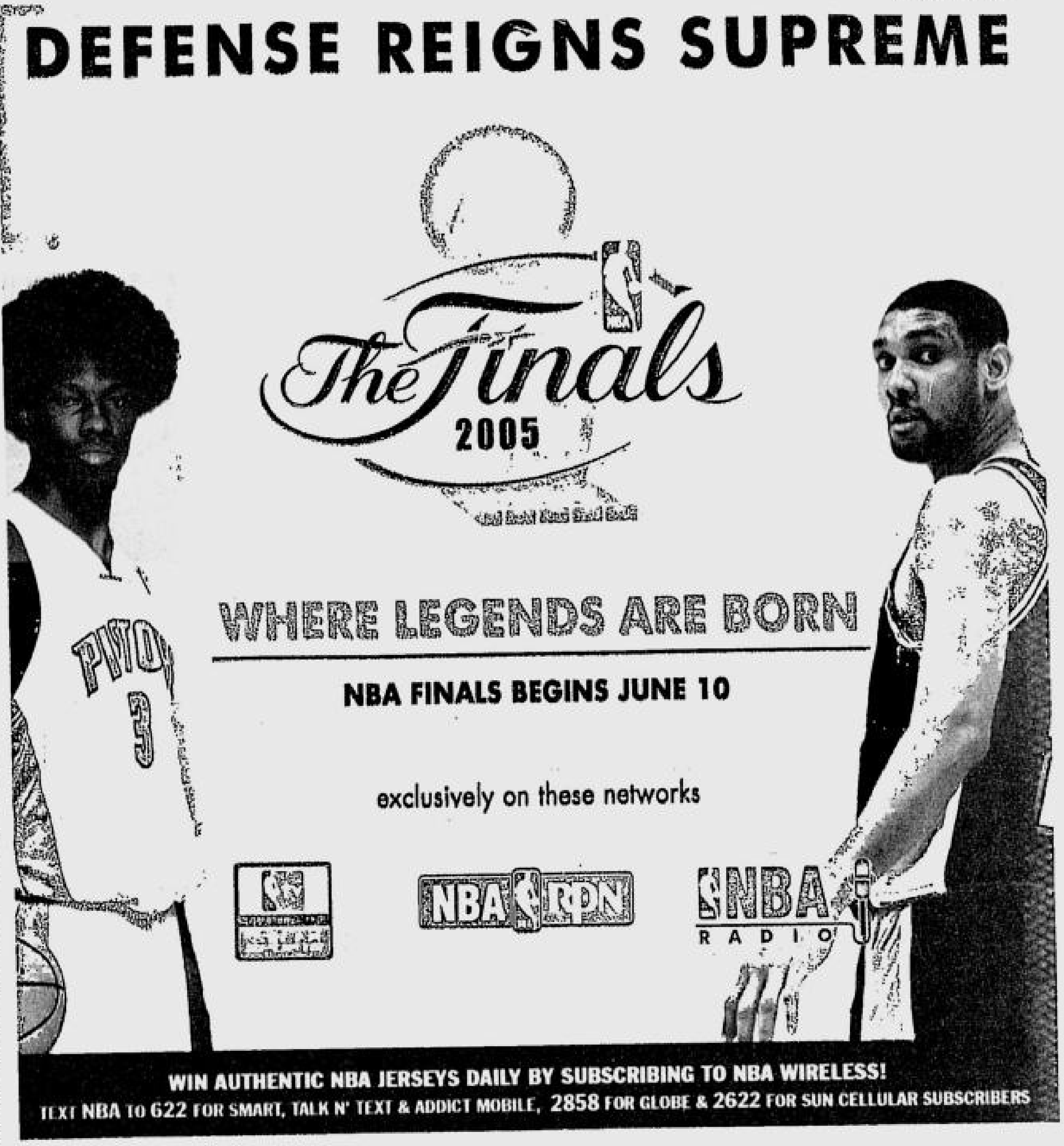
Argentina, Galaxy gain streetball finals

TEAM Argentina pounded out a 19-14 victory over Team Argonaut in a duel between West Negros College teams for the seniors crown to advance to the regional finals of the adidas Streetball Challenge at the University of St. La Salle gym over the weekend.

Jonblargs Alisbo sizzled with eight points, Siverino Baclao Jr. and Jelmar Padilla tossed in four points apiece and Rundy Baydo came up with three points for the Elvis Atinado-mentored Team Argentina, which joined Iloilo leg winner Team Amaze of University of San Agustin, along with the winner in the Cebu eliminations next week, in the Visayas finals on June 19 at SM Cebu.

Team Galaxy of Barangay Zone 12-A, meanwhile, nipped Team Ghost of Barangay Zone 20-A, 17-16, to rule the girls' play of the event sponsored by adidas and co-presented by Globe Gentxt.

Mary Joy Denosta scored 10 points, Noreen Bilono had five while Kristine Joy delos Reyes and Charity Mae Rodis each had a point each for Team Galaxy, which also gained a berth in the regional finals of this event backed by McDonald's, Cherifer Multivitamins, Snickers chocolate bar, Coppertone, adidas fragrance and body care, Blue Angel alcohol, Milo, Powerade, Viva Mineral Water, adidas eyewear and Yehey.com.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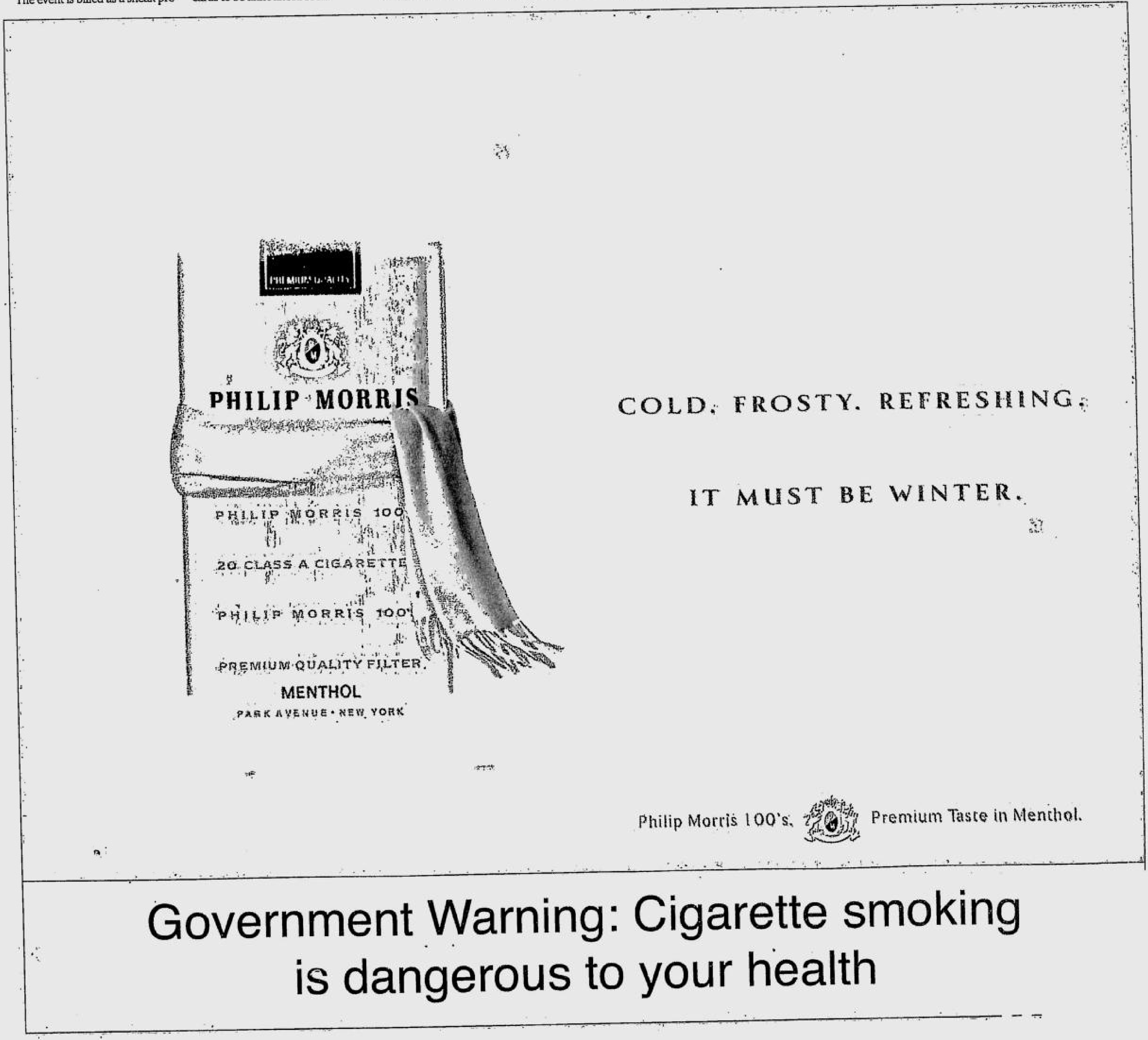
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June 11 & 12	Passage des Embolies Street Theater (Greenbelt 3) 2pm and 8pm
June 13 - 30	The Man Who Planted Trees Art Exhibit (Glorietta Artspace)
June 14	Indoor Circus by Camille Boitel (Greenbelt 1, Onstage) 8:00pm
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Pacquiao's US lawyers in town to collect data

By Ed Picson
Contributor

WITH Manny Pacquiao's case against his estranged US promoter Murad Muhammad slated to be heard starting June 20 in New York, Pacquiao lawyers Judd Burstein and Keith Davidson quietly blew into town early Tuesday morning.

Although there have been reports that the Ring Magazine featherweight king was scheduled to leave for New York to attend the hearings, Burstein and Davidson apparently want to make sure they are able to meet with Pacquiao personally before the hearing.

Sources say the lawyers are also in Manila to collect further information and evidence pertinent to the case. Pacquiao is suing the flamboyant Murad for $20 million in damages and $13 million on five claims for relief.

The popular boxer from Gen. Santos City charged that Murad had shortchanged him in the fights the latter arranged for him in the United States for the past seven years.

Also implicated is long-time Pacquiao business manager Rod Nazario whom his lawyers have pointed to as the one responsible for the non-payment of Pacquiao's taxes in the US.

Nazario, married to Supreme Court Justice Minita Chico-Nazario, has denied the allegations.

The case has been assigned to Federal Court Judge Loretta Preska of the Southern District of New York. Preska has ordered "an expedited jury trial," a move welcomed by both camps.

Nicholas Kahn, another lawyer for Pacquiao, has hailed the move as "a big victory for (Pacquiao). A protracted and long drawn-out trial is the least thing we wanted."

Pacquiao is busy overseeing the Metro Gensan basketball tournament which he bankrolled with a P300,000 donation.

FED LEAGUE

Big starts for N'woods, Forest

Standings (win-draw-loss):
JW Blue: Orchard 1-0-0, Forest Hills 1-0-0, Canlubang 0-1-0, Eastridge 0-1-0, Mimosa 0-0-2; **JW Gold:** Alabang 1-1-0, Southwoods 1-1-0, Northwoods 1-0-0, Highlands 0-0-1, Sherwood Hills 0-0-2; **JW Green:** Manila Golf 1-1-0, Valley 1-1-0, Wack Wack 1-0-0, Riviera 0-0-1, Sta. Elena 0-0-2

DEFENDING champion Royal Northwoods opened its title-retention bid on a torrid note by swamping Sherwood Hills, 3.5-0.5, even as more draws punctuated second-week action in the 2005 Johnnie Walker Federation Golf League matches played in various venues.

Boy Unson-Jun Fontanilla won in the foursomes, Omar Dungca-Junie Fontanilla prevailed in best-ball, Kim Chang Hoi-Emmanuel Alarilla took the scramble format and Rodel Mangulabnan-Tommy Joson III halved the high-low point as the reigning champions earned a bonus point to stay within sight of the frontrunning Alabang in the tough Johnnie Walker Gold division.

Sherwoods took its second straight loss after bowing to sister team Manila Southwoods, which fought to a 2-2 draw with Alabang.

Francis Jimenez and Vic Guzman saved the draw for 2003 champion Alabang by winning the foursomes on the last hole that went with the easy victory of Iggy Clavecilla and Rolly Castro in the scramble. Alabang routed Tagaytay Highlands, 4-0, last week to earn an extra point.

Marty Ilagan eagled the last hole to lift his partnership with Theodore Pascual to a 2-up win in high-low and the aggregate pair of Florene de los Santos and Benjie Sarmiento assured the draw for Southwoods.

Manila Golf and Valley vaulted into a share of the lead in the Johnnie Walker Green after prevailing over Riviera and Sta. Elena, respectively, in the event also supported by Pagcor and organized by the Federation of Golf Clubs Phils. Inc.

In the Johnnie Walker Blue division, Forest Hills debuted with a 3-1 conquest of Mimosa on wins by the pairs of Levy Marcelino-Bobby Chico, Ronnie Littaua-Eming Buenaventura and Ferdie Atendido-Peter Young. Forest joined Orchard for the lead while Canlubang and Eastridge fought to a 2-2 tie to share third spot.

Valley's win was highlighted by an 8-and-6 rout posted by Joey Quimson-Adrian Mauricio in aggregate while Jonathan Aguirre-Ryan Co added the high-low point and Zaldy Villa-Matt Mendoza half of the scramble point for a 2.5-1.5 result.

Winning for Manila Golf were Fausto Preysler-Mike Prieto (foursomes), Jojo Guingona-Dodo Cu-unjieng (high-low) and Richie Garcia-Dindo Litonjua (aggregate).

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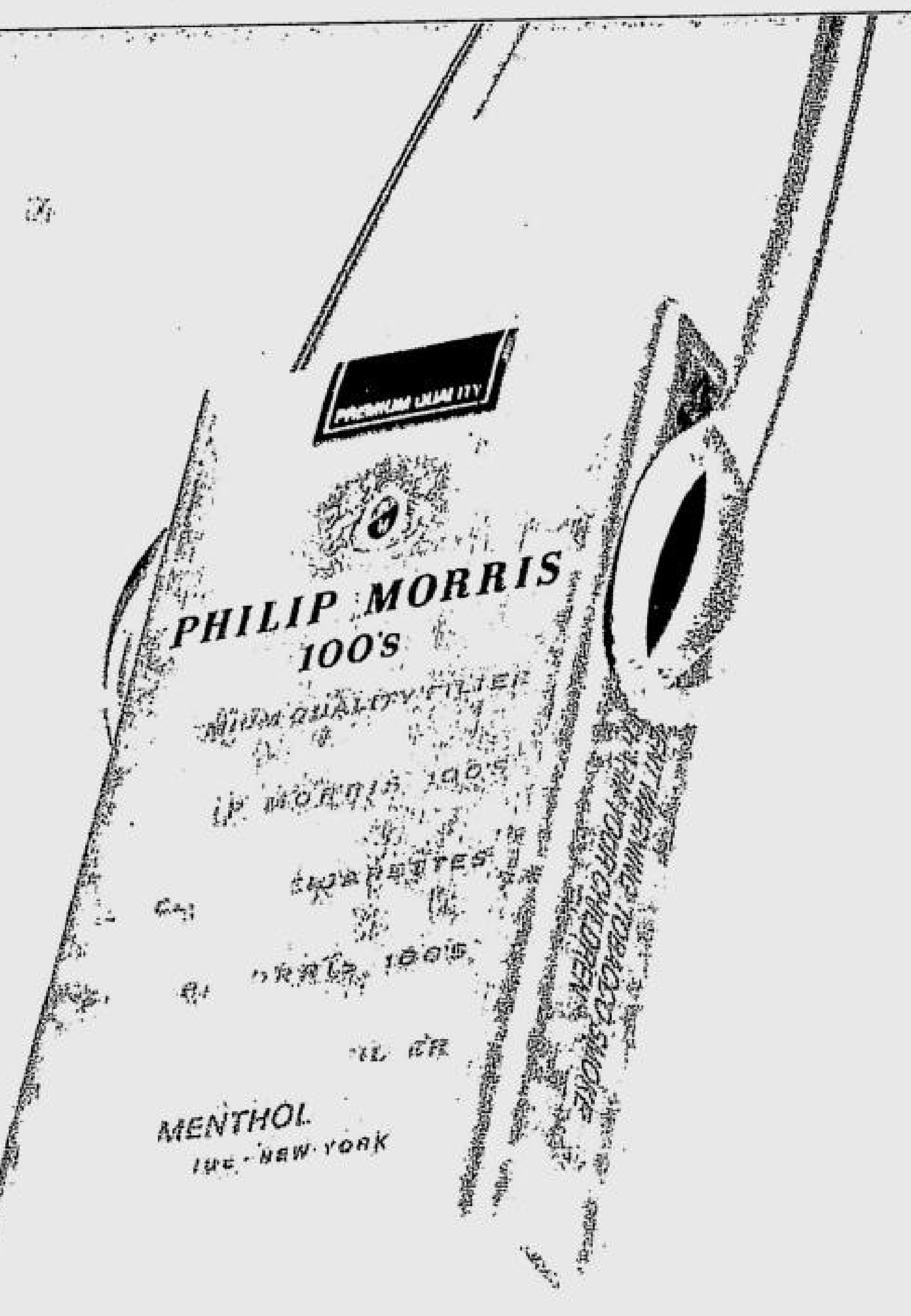

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2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
June 8, Wed., 7pm San Miguel vs. Alaska

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June 10, Fri. **2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE**
4:45pm Sta Lucia vs. Shell 7:30pm Coca Cola vs Winner of Alaska -SMB

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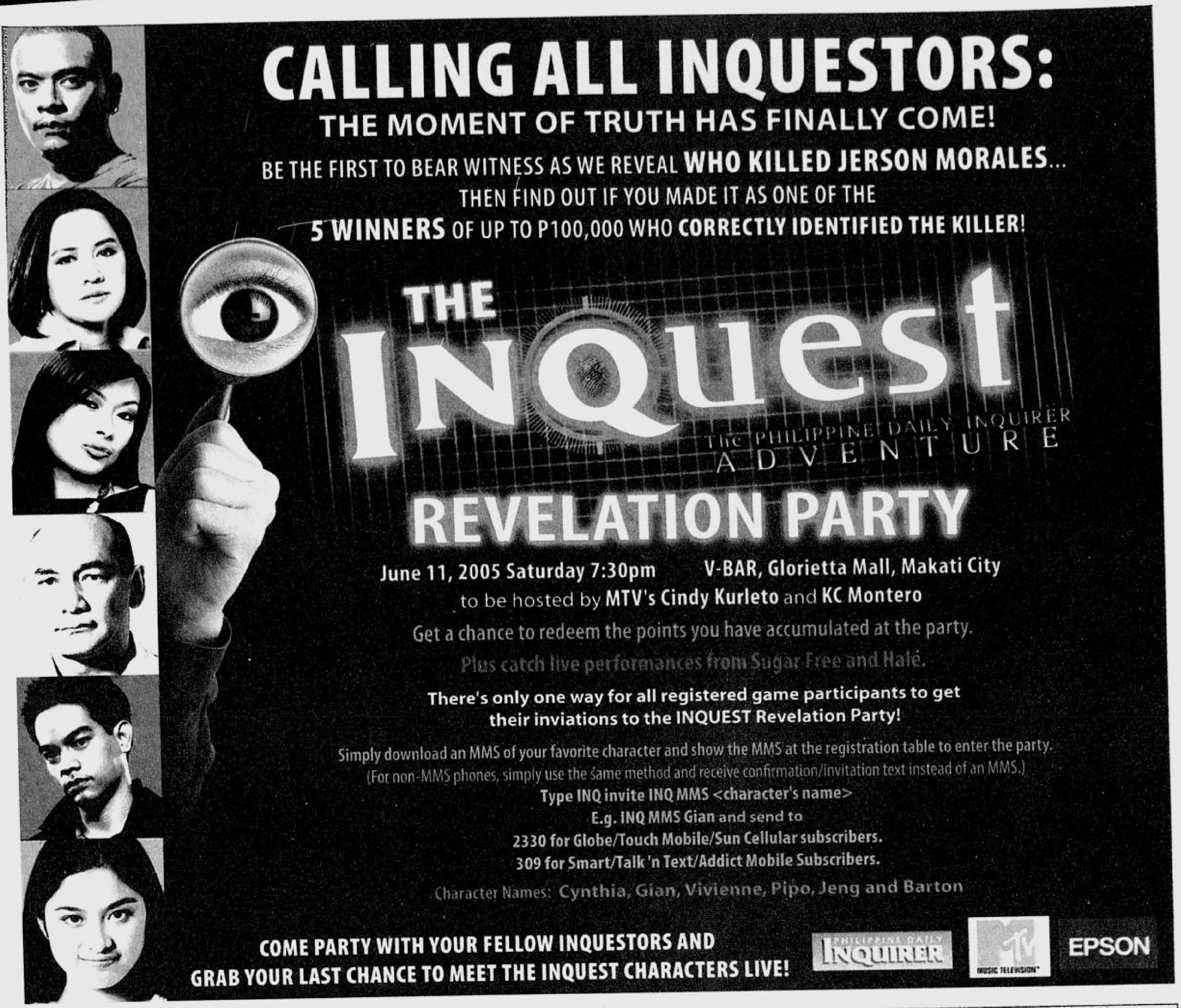

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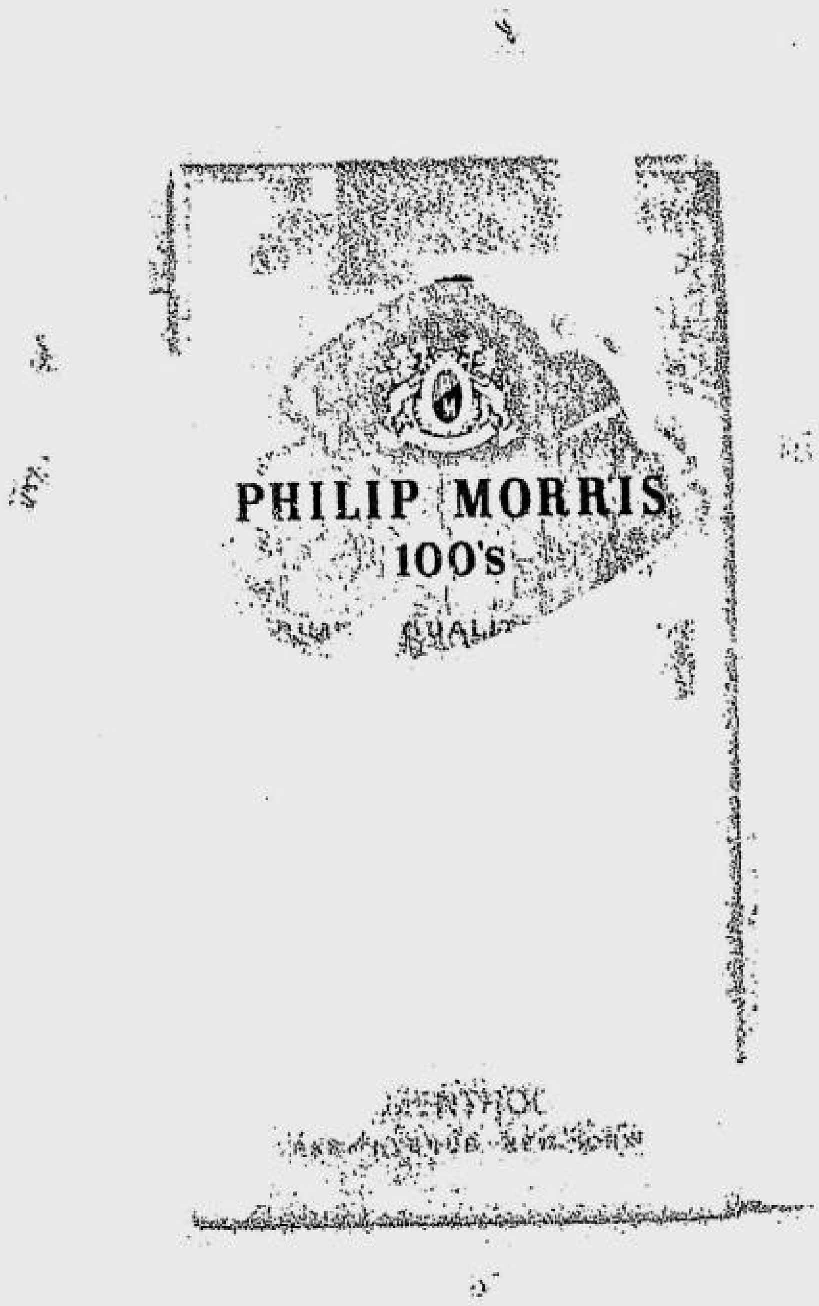

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SPORTS

Filipino AF3 drivers gun for China breakthrough

FILIPINO drivers hope to score a breakthrough win when the Asian Formula Three series visits Guangdong, China, anew on June 18-19 for rounds five and six of the event.

Indonesian Ananda Mikola and Australian Christian Jones dominated the first four rounds but Filipino drivers led by Pepon Marave and Tyson Sy are confident they can build on their past performances at the Zhuhai International Circuit.

"It's still a long race," said Marave during yesterday's PSA Forum at the Seafood Wharf where he guested along with the 17-year-old Sy, Irishman John O'Hara and AF3 race director Mark Goodard. "We did quite good the last time, so we're hoping to take advantage of that."

Of the Filipino drivers, Dado Peña and Sy made the biggest impact in Zhuhai last month, finishing second and third, respectively, in the third and fourth legs of the 12-stop series.

Marave, the 2003 overall champion, finished fifth in both races.

Goddard believes Marave and Co. have what it takes to crowd out Mikola and Jones for stage honors.

RP karters tipped to prevail

ALL eyes will be on the Philippines' Michelle Bumgarner and Matteo Guidicelli as the country hosts the opening leg of the 2005 Asian Zone Open Karting Championships at the Carmona Racing Circuit this weekend.

Bumgarner, daughter of an American businessman and his Filipino wife, is seeking a second straight title in the Formula-A Open class while Guidicelli, who hails from Cebu, hopes to surpass his runner-up finish in last year's men's race won by Calvin Wongwengman of Malaysia.

"Familiarity of the track will be a big advantage to us," said the charming Bumgarner, who appeared along with Guidicelli and Rose Feria, assistant general manager of the Carmona Racing Circuit, in yesterday's session of the PSA Forum.

BUMGARNER

GUIDICELLI

The kart to be used by the 15-year-old Bumgarner for the weekend races was on display at the function room of the Seafood Wharf, new home of the public sports program sponsored by Red Bull, Circure, Supermax and Pagcor.

Both Bumgarner and Guidicelli, winner of the Manila leg last year, hope to perform well in front of their countrymen.

"We'll try to win this one for the Filipinos," said Bumgarner.

Apart from the Formula-A Open class, the other titles up for grabs are the Rotax senior, Rotax junior, Cadet 60 and Cadet 85.

Feria said the emergence of young racers like Bumgarner and Guidicelli has fuelled the popularity of karting in the country. She cited the construction of kart tracks such as Speed Zone and another one at the CCP Complex as proof the sport is getting a boost.

Casa Verde keeps Nokia east crown

CASA Verde rallied with a stirring 294 to topple erstwhile frontrunner Loyola Grand Villas and rule the Nokia intervillage east sector tournament for the second straight year at the Valley Golf Club's Executive Course Monday.

Bobby Ng fired 39 points under the Stableford system, matching Jojo Guiao and Sonny Bitong's outputs, as Casa Verde fought back from 15 points down to win by eight over Loyola Grand Villas with a 36-hole aggregate of 573.

The Loyola Grand golfers struggled with a 271 at the short but up-and-down layout to settle for second place with 565, while the combined team of Cinco Hermanos and Monte Vista finished third with a 554 after a 279.

Casa Verde, Loyola Grand Villas and Cinco Hermanos/Monte Vista thus advanced to the grand finals, along with the other top three finishers of the three other sectoral tournaments of this annual event sponsored by Nokia.

Backing up Guiao, Bitong and Ng, who did not see action in the first round of this tournament exclusively for villages in San Juan, Pasig and Marikina, were Jojo Limpo (37), Raffy Villavicencio (36), Mike Kaluag (36), Florencio delos Santos (35) and Alfredo Nasser (33).

LGV pooled 294 at Forest Hills last month only to fall short this time. Johnny Pineda shot a 36 while Tony de Ubago, who had a 38 the first time out, didn't count with a 28.

SPORTSWATCH

In-form Cua shows way

SHERCILA Cua defeated Woman National Master Joann Toledo in the seventh round Monday to retain solo leadership in the Women's Standard Chess Grand Finals at the Sunflower Hotel in Tagaytay City. Cua scored the win with the black pieces of a Slav Defense duel and pushed her total to 6.0 points. Woman Fide Master Sheerie Joy Lomibao kept Cua within sight after beating WNM Catherine Pereña in 59 moves of Center Counter. She's in solo second with 5.0 points. Enerose Magno and Therese Gonzales also posted decisive results to remain inside the cut at the halfway mark of the 14-round event. The top five finishers in the tournament will represent the country in this year's Southeast Asian Games.

Maga seizes solo lead

NATIONAL Master Mirabeau Maga downed Allan Macala in the sixth round to seize solo leadership in the Baragatan Open Chess Festival at the provincial capitol in Puerto Princesa City. Maga's third straight win pushed his total to 5.5 points. Erstwhile co-leaders Nadera and IM Emmanuel Senador drew their match to go a notch down with 5.0, the same output of IM Luis Chiong, NM Rolando Nolte and Edmundo Gatus. Nolte and Chiong also drew their match.

Lim favored at PCC tilt

DICKY Lim, a seasoned gamefowl breeder from Malvar, Batangas, is touted as the heavy favorite to rule the upcoming Super 4-Cock Derby this Friday at the Pasay City Cockpit. Lim's victory in the first and second editions of the 330 K Big Event 6-Cock Derby recently made him the man to beat, said pit manager Eric dela Rosa. Lim will again use the Golden Circle and RQP San Juan Coliseum entries. The special cockfest sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000 and hosted by father-and-son Jet and Joel Fernando of Pampanga will also feature eight American cockers headed by Billy Johnson of Lousiana. Submission of entries is tomorrow from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 843-1890, 843-1746 or 816-6750.

'Cockaibang Pista' slated

THE THUNDERBIRD "pintakasi" Cockaibang Pista is expected to make the World Slasher Cup 8-Cock International Derby slated June 14, 16 and 18 at the Araneta Coliseum an event to remember. "The World Slasher Cup has also become a homecoming event for Filipino cockers worldwide, a reunion of old cocking friends and a convention of gamefowl breeders from several nations," said Thunderbird brand manager Dante Nacar. Marketing director Ed Mapanao said this is the reason the company is launching Thunderbird Pintakasi as a festival of sorts to celebrate the staging of the event. A Baton Twirling Contest is among the many contests lined up, with the winning band majorette and her runner-up getting P5,000 and P3,000 cash, respectively. For inquiries, call Liza Ramos at 638-8332.

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MR. KIRAN KARNIK is the president of NASSCOM - the premier trade body of Commerce for the IT software and services industry in India. He works closely with the industry, members and the Indian Central & State governments to formulate policies and strategies for the advancement of this sector locally as well as internationally. His key function is to build global brand equity for the Indian software and service industry.

Mr. Karnik has been the guiding force for the Indian IT industry during the outsourcing backlash. By providing perspective and background information, Mr. Karnik has been instrumental in promoting India's technology strength to the world. To fuel growth in the domestic market, Mr. Karnik has lobbied with the government to announce tariff cuts on computer-hardware.

Business Week recently named Mr. Karnik as one of the 'Stars of Asia'. He was also selected as *Forbes Magazine's* 'Face of the Year 2003', for being a driving force behind India's offshoring wave.

DATUK DR MOHAMED ARIF NUN is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Multimedia Development Corporation, the one-stop agency for realizing the Multimedia Super Corridor. He is responsible to provide the leadership to drive the MDC as a high performance organization that is responsible to translate the MSC vision into action.

Prior to his appointment in MDC, he was the Deputy Director-General 1 (1991-1996) of the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems (MIMOS) responsible for its corporate research program.

He is the former Vice-President of the Malaysian Invention and Design Society (MINDS). He is the current Chairman of the Malaysian Design Council. On 25 February, 2003, he was appointed to the Board of Directors of the newly-formed Malaysia Intellectual Property Corporation.

Conference
Waterfront Hotel, Lahug, Cebu City
22nd to 23rd of June 2005

Exhibition
Waterfront Hotel, Lahug, Cebu City
22nd to 24th of June 2005

The C.E.B.U. ICT 2005 will be a mega event. The invaluable learning, branding, networking and business matching, and teamwork that the international conference-cum-exhibition will afford the various stakeholders of the ICT industry will serve to push Cebu as a significant player in the ICT and IT-Enabled Services (ITES) industry.

That the Philippines, in general, and Cebu, in particular, is poised for such growth in ICT is one of the "best kept secrets" in the global ICT industry.

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Don't miss this groundbreaking event that will pave the way for the convergence of the region's ICT stakeholders, and the emergence of Asia as the world's preferred ICT center. Top government officials to grace this event include: CICT Chairman Hon. Virgilio L. Peña, DTI Secretary Hon. Juan B. Santos, Hon. Senator Manuel A. Roxas II and Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

With full support from the local government and the Cebu Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCCI), C.E.B.U. ICT 2005 will launch "CEBU" as a competitive global brand and will focus on information and communications technology (ICT) as a key component for swift economic expansion. Spearheading this event are: Cebu Provincial Governor Hon. Gwendolyn F. Garcia, Cebu City Mayor Hon. Tomas R. Osmeña, Cebu Chamber of Commerce & Industry President Mr. Robert L. Go, CBM Overall Chair Mr. Francis O. Monera and C.E.B. U. ICT 2005 Chair Mr. Bonifacio D. Belen.

C.E.B.U ICT 2005 Partial Provisional Agenda

This year's conference and exhibition carries the theme "Asia's Emerging Role as a Global Center for IT & ITES-Enabled Services." Plenary and breakout sessions on vital topics aim to promote Asia as a premiere global ICT center, strengthen regional cooperation and collaboration, as well as highlight each country and city's key competencies, in order to present the region as a synergy of competent to meet the demands of global business.

Event Highlights - Plenary Sessions

Global IT and ITES Trends and Strategic Foresight - *Gene Hall, CEO, Gartner*
Opportunities & Threats for Asia's Emerging IT and ITES Industry - *Kiran Karnik, President, NASSCOM*
Where Will You Be Tomorrow? A Roadmap for Innovation - *Matt Thompson, Director, Technology Outreach and Open Source Programs Office Sun Microsystems*
Development of a Robust Software Industry - *Regional Speaker from Microsoft*
Evolving an IT & ITES Industry Development Model - *Datuk Dr. Mohamed Arif Nun, CEO, Multimedia Development Corporation*
The Global Innovation Outlook - *Erik Joseph Tabuena, Country Leader, Business Consulting Services, IBM Philippines, Inc.*
Next Generation Networks and Their Impact on the IT and ITES Industry - *Tan Seow Nguan, Director for Network Planning, Singapore Telecom*
Best Practices for Securing an Enterprise Environment for SMEs and Big Business - *Neil Graham, Vice President, Mid-Market Applications, Oracle Corporation Asia-Pacific*
ICT in Basic Education: Developing Human Capital at the Foundational Level - *Luli Arroyo, Director for Strategic Development, FIT-ED*
Creating Quality e-Government Solutions - *Panelists from DCI, NCC and Fujitsu*
Role of Venture Financing in IT & ITES Industry Development - *Paco Sandejas, Managing Partner, Narra Venture Capital*

Event Sponsors

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Websites: http://www.cebuict2005.com &
http://www.cbm2005.com

Don't miss this opportunity! Complete the pre-registration form below and fax to C.E.B.U. ICT 2005 Secretariat Manila +632 757 3512 or Cebu +6332 415 8483. Full conference registration details are available at www.cebuict2005.com. For more information, you may also call call TeamAsia (Manila) at +632 7573500 ext. 228 or TeamAsia (Cebu) +6332 415 8481 to 82.

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Registration Fee	Pre-Registration (May 1 to June 17, 2005)	On-Site Registration (On or after June 18, 2005)
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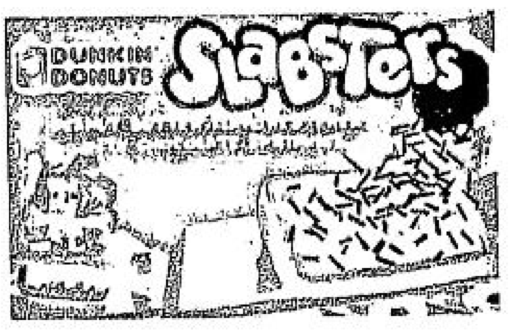


Ara's dream wedding

"AS a kid, I dreamed of a big church wedding," says actress Ara Mina. "Now I'd rather have a garden wedding. I'd like lots of trees around, a waterfall, if possible—I'm a nature lover. Or it could be a hacienda setting. *Basta* outdoors."

Outdoors and grand.

"Yes, *en grande*, I guess, because I'm a movie star," Ara says. "It's important that it should be very organized, too, and my family and all my friends are there."

But more than anything, the actress adds, "*Ang* dream *ko*, perfect marriage. What's the use of getting married in a big way, and then separating afterwards?"

Funny that she should be thinking of these things now when there is no one special in her life.

"Mother Ricky (Reyes) asked me to do a wedding pictorial for him, and I asked him, 'Aren't you supposed to get someone with a boyfriend?' And then I thought, maybe it was a sign," Ara relates, giggling.

The last man Ara was linked to was actor Jomari Yllana.

Turning serious, she says, "I believe in soul mates. I believe there's one man for me."

And there was only one woman for Reyes' Bridal Make-Up campaign after the famous aesthetician noticed Ara on a TV show.

"She has this dreamy air about her *na pang*-blushing bride *talaga*," Reyes explains. "Maybe it's because she's never been married."

Make-up: by Ricky Reyes
Gowns: Ricky Cristobal and Raye Encarnacion
Location: Golden Sunset Resort, Calatagan, Batangas

'Mutya' a battle of beauties from here and abroad

By Armin Adina

FORGET the hard court. The competition between locals and Filipino-foreigners moves to the beauty pageant arena as the 37th annual Mutya ng Pilipinas invites a record number of delegates from Filipino communities abroad.

The roster of 24 candidates for this year's search includes eight delegates from Australia, Europe and North America.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

INQUIRER Entertainment talked to some of the candidates during their briefing at the ABC 5 offices in Makati City recently.

Shelly Wynne Manacsa, 21, represents California. The 21-year-old nursing student aims to duplicate the feat of California-based Filipino Miriam Chui, crowned Mutya in 2002. Shelly is a part-time model in Los Angeles.

Canada sent 20-year-old Annalie Bonda, winner of the Miss Philippines-Canada pageant. Annalie is a student of Fashion Communication, Marketing and Management student of the International Academy of Design and Technology.

In 2003, she represented Canada in the Miss Global Teen Quest won by the delegate from Puerto Rico. "She was very prepared," said Annalie of the winner.

The US East Coast is represented by 19-year-old Katherine Bernal and Anijia (pronounced Anya) Jalac, 22. Katherine and Anijia joined the same pageant in the US and landed first and second, respectively. Katherine is a Biology junior at the Brooklyn College-City University of New York and has an associate degree in fashion. She is a member of the Filipino Dance Company in New York. "My favorite dance is the Pandango sa Ilaw," she said.

Anijia grew up in a traditional Filipino family. Her parents are very strict, especially about boys, she said, adding that she thinks "it's very good." She was just recently allowed to have a boyfriend.

Good fight

But the local girls are expected to give the "imports" stiff competition. There are two very strong contenders from Bicolandia.

Windena Zaragoza and Penelope Joy Jacinto have known each other for three years. They first met at the Miss Camarines 2002 pageant and have since competed against each other in latter pageants.

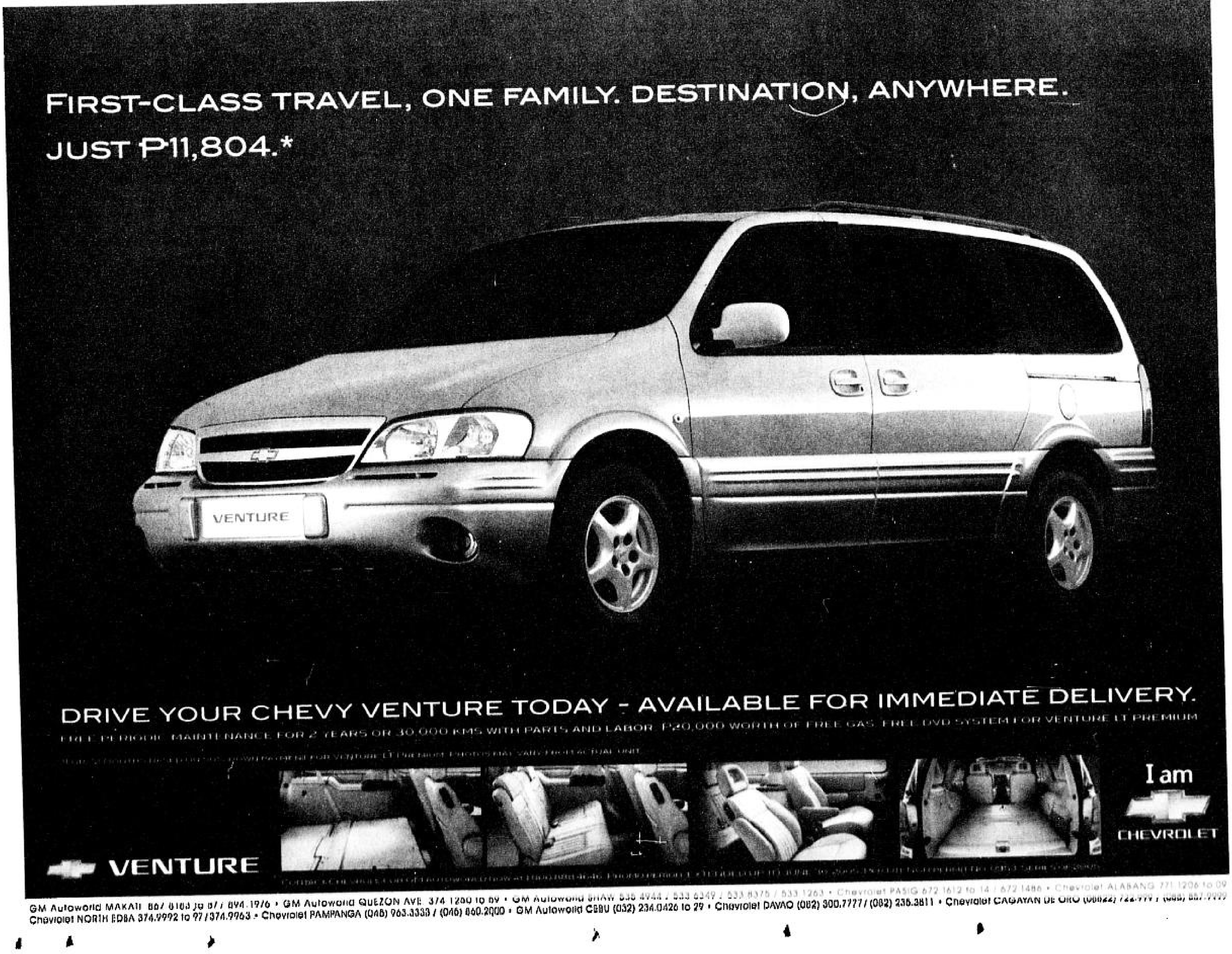
They were runners up in the last Mutya ng Ibalong Quest.

Dumaguete sent 20-year-old Liana Basmayor. Although a self-confessed pageant "veteran," Liana quickly added: "I'm not making [joining pageants] a career."

Fashion designer Renee Salud

MUTYA/ A2-2

ARABELLA Hanesh, 18, from Pangasinan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OPENING TODAY

Nasaan Ka Man

Directed by Cholo Laurel
Stars Claudine Barretto, Diether Ocampo, Jericho Rosales, Gloria Diaz, Hilda Koronel

FROM the ABS-CBN website: "Nasaan Ka Man" is an uncanny dramatic love story written by one of Philippine cinema's finest writers, Ricky Lee. It boasts of breath-taking visuals, stunning cinematography and powerful individual performances by the country's young leading dramatic actors... [This] is Claudine's follow-up movie after the critically acclaimed and box-office hit "Milan." Through this film, Jericho Rosales also affirms that he is the most competent actor of his generation... [The movie] revolves around three adoptive children of two spinster sisters who raised them. They are the epitome of a perfectly happy family until jealousy, revenge and family secrets threaten to break them apart.

From a bored moviegoer: Yawn.

Premonition (Yogen)

Directed by Norio Tsuruta
Stars Daisuke Ban, Maki Horikita, Hana Inoue

Summary: Hideki Satomi stumbles across an obituary of his young daughter. Shortly after, a freak accident occurs and he witnesses her horrible demise, which coincides with the obit's description. Three years later, the grieving Hideki is haunted by the appearance of more newspaper clippings, all of which foretell disaster. As his sanity unravels and the walls of reality crumble, Hideki tries to discover the source of these eerie signs and prevent future tragedies.

In a review for Slasherpool.com, AnthroFred wrote: "This is the second movie in the new J-Horror series from the director of 'Ringu.' Since I'm not a big fan of 'Ringu,' I wasn't expecting this to be very good. At first sight it seemed like a Final Destination rip-off but soon I realized that I was dead wrong. 'Premonition' is a very original horror flick which brings us back to when Japanese horror movies weren't all about the scares but more about the mystery... It really has it all, the scares from 'Ju-On,' the mystery from 'Ringu' and the surprising twists from 'A Tale Of Two Sisters.' That doesn't make it a rip-off however, it's actually one of the most original movies, if not the most original, I've seen this year."

Mr. and Mrs. Smith

Directed by Doug Liman
Stars Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Efren Ramirez

Summary: John and Jane meet, fall in love and marry without knowing that they're both assassins for hire. Five years later, they are assigned to rub each other out. And the fun begins.

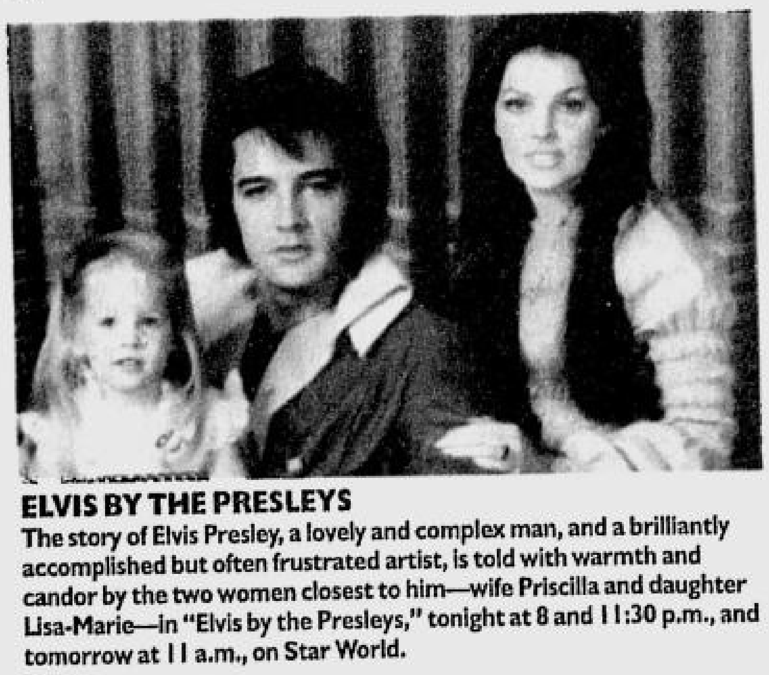
In a review for Variety.com, Todd McCartney wrote: "Originally penned by scenarist-du-jour Simon Kinberg ('XXX: State of the Union,' 'Fantastic Four') as his thesis for a master's degree at Columbia, 'Mr. & Mrs. Smith' essentially takes the view that, as passion and excitement in marriage is destined to fade, what a couple needs is a little mortal combat to spice it up... Pitt and Jolie feint, banter and attack with aplomb, their movie-star wattage providing the only plausible excuse for paying attention to the shenanigans parading across the screen. When they're old, they might well think back on this moment as the time when they looked their best. But they certainly won't be able to consider it their best film."

Shut Up and Kiss Me!

Directed by Gary Brockette
Stars Brad Rowe, Christopher Daniel Barnes, Krista Allen

Summary: Ryan is a rookie stockbroker living with his psychic mom. Pete is a slick surfer dude yet to find commitment. They meet the women of their dreams on the same day. Ryan knocks heads in an elevator with the gorgeous Jessica, passing out before getting her number. Pete falls for the insatiable Tiara, whose uncle is a mob boss.

Brandon-95 from Newport Beach, CA, wrote this review on the Net: "The first half of the movie was all right... kind of cute and quirky. But then I think they just lost direction and weren't sure how to wrap up the movie because it just got worse and worse. The characters were unlikable and absurd. The flow seemed very jumpy, possibly attributed to a poor editing job. The producers mentioned it took them five years to complete it. Maybe they just got tired."



ELVIS BY THE PRESLEYS
The story of Elvis Presley, a lovely and complex man, and a brilliantly accomplished but often frustrated artist, is told with warmth and candor by the two women closest to him—wife Priscilla and daughter Lisa-Marie—in "Elvis by the Presleys," tonight at 8 and 11:30 p.m., and tomorrow at 11 a.m., on Star World.

'Sugo' challenges 'Panday'

GMA 7 invests in high-tech equipment and martial arts mentors

By Jocelyn T. Valle and Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

FORTY percent of the total budget for GMA 7's new *teleserye* "Sugo" went to the purchase of hi-tech equipment and the hiring of international action choreographer Wong Wai Fai, INQUIRER Entertainment learned.

"This is a big step for GMA 7," said executive producer Hellen Rose Sese during a break in last week's "Sugo" pictorial in Pasig City. "[But] it's all worth it. Wong is a perfectionist. It took us 15 takes to shoot one particular sequence."

According to Sese, the script had to be translated to English for the benefit of the Cantonese-speaking Wong. "His secretary, who knew how to speak English, then translated for him," Sese explained. "He said he needed to know why Richard (Gutierrez, lead star) has to run in a particular scene, for instance, before the moves could be choreographed."

Sese added: "One interesting trivia is that the harness that Jackie Chan used in 'Bulletproof Monk' is the same harness that Richard used in rehearsing his stunts."

For three weeks, the Hong Kong-based Wong will be working here with assistant choreographer Cheung Chi Chuen and wire stuntmen Cheung Ping Chuen and Lau Tze Ming.

"This show has all the elements of a soap series—action, comedy, adventure and even drama. It's 'Kung Fu Hustle,' 'The Mummy," and 'Indiana Jones' rolled into one," said Sese.

"Sugo" is no ordinary tale of good versus evil, director Dominic Zapata pointed out. He explained that the central characters—Miguel and Amante—are both after people called *alay* (offering), whose blood can awaken an *anito* or spirit-god.

One character is tasked to protect the *alay*. Another has to keep the *anito* from coming back to life, so he has to kill the *alay*, who will appear one by one in the narrative.

The compelling story is the brainchild of head writer RJ Nuevas, a former *komiks* novelist and now one of the busiest movie and TV scriptwriters. Nuevas said "Sugo" was originally a horror vehicle, but that it started taking different forms last December when it landed in the hands of GMA 7's creative geniuses.

Kung fu eventually became the centerpiece of the series, thus the hiring of the HK martial arts experts.

The story line is infused with Chinese and Spanish influences, Nuevas said. It begins in the Spanish era when Apu Apukay offers his soul to the *anito* in exchange for power and domination. He's slain by Conde Vergonze, but the curse of his spirit lives.

In the 1980s, the descendants of Apukay and Vergonze fall in love and bear twins, who were forced to separate. The twins, not knowing the other existed, grew up to be Miguel and Amante.

Portraying two roles in one show is not a first for Richard Gutierrez. In the recently concluded hit series, "Mulawin," his character, avian hero Aguiluz assumed human identity. In "Sugo," his characters share screen time.

"That's the fun of it," the young actor said. "I'll be able to show my creativity and acting skills in playing the two very different characters. Miguel lives in Binondo, but he's not Chinese. He has a clue as to his destiny, but he refuses to accept it. Amante, on the other hand, follows orders like a true soldier. He's not necessarily bad; he was just raised in a certain way."

Is he getting double pay, too? Shaking his head, the charismatic son of former matinee idol Eddie Gutierrez sheepishly muttered, "*Hindi naman.*"

In real life, Richard also has a twin, Raymond, who co-hosts "SOP Gigsters" with him. As tots, they starred in several Regal potboilers and an ad for a milk brand. "I've asked him to be my double in 'Sugo,' but he didn't like the idea," Richard confessed.

To prepare for the physical demands of his new show, Richard took up kung fu for a month. He's now training for cinematic martial arts and harness work under Wong, whose credentials include the Oscar-winning film "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," plus "Kung Fu Hustle," "Rush Hour 2" and "Bulletproof Monk."

"I learn a lot from them," he said of his mentors, who call him "Handsome Boy."

"It's fun, though it's tough on the body," he added.

Zapata, who also co-directs "Darna," promised that "Sugo" would change the look of local TV. "It will be like a Hong Kong martial arts movie on TV, not like a typical Filipino show," he said.

Richard admitted he was feeling the big pressure to top "Darna," which continues to rate well after its pilot week broke records, its highest rating being the heretofore unheard of 52.1 percent.

"But we're trying not to focus on the pressure," the actor said. "We're just doing our best to come up with a show that the audience will enjoy watching. We're happy with how things are going right now."

Just one wrinkle, though. Bianca King, who was supposed to play one of the major roles, recently appeared on ABS-CBN's "The Buzz" and announced that she had been dropped from the project. She is said to have left GMA 7.

"I tried to convince her to stay," said Richard, "but it was her manager's decision, so we can't do anything about it."

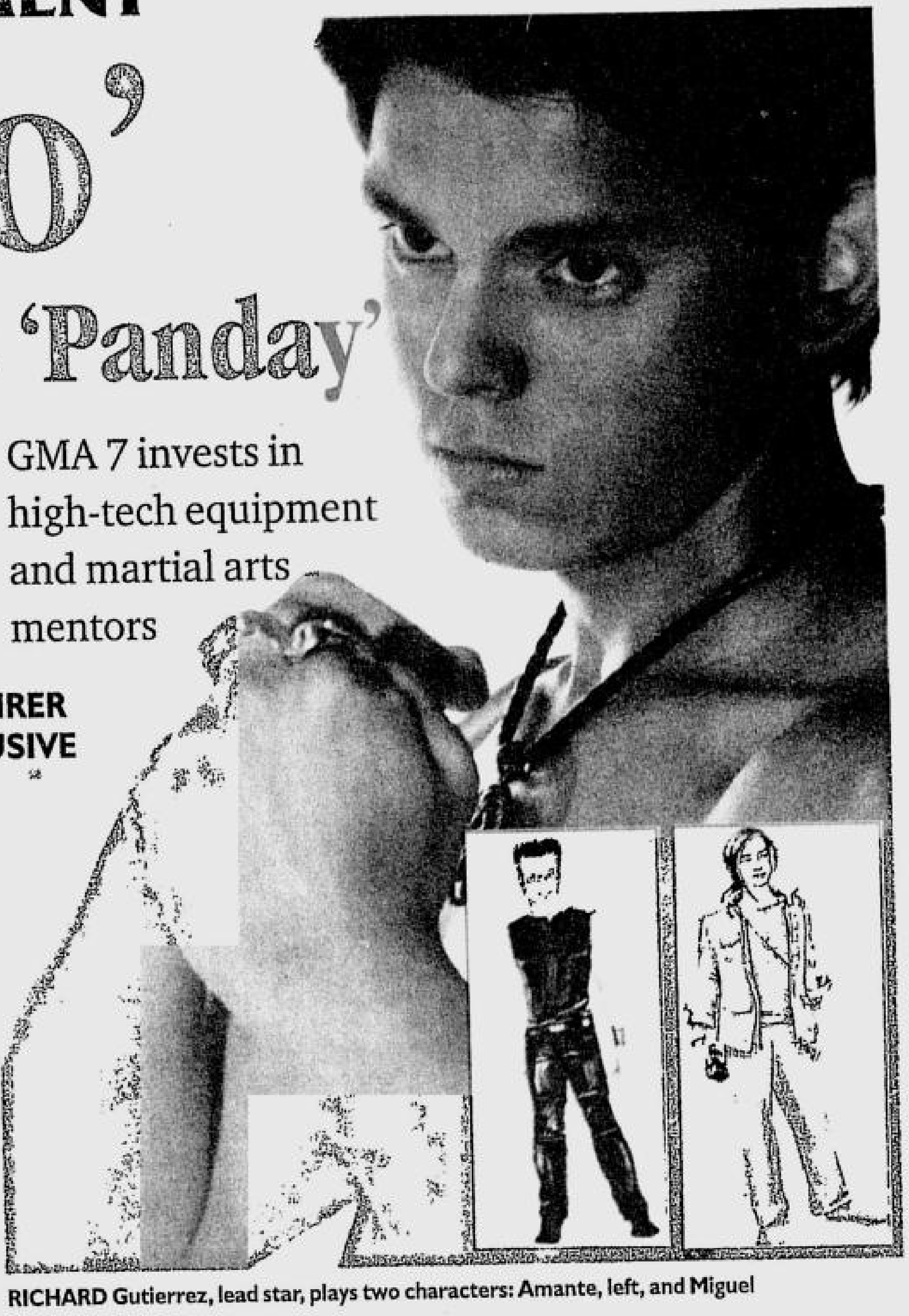
"Sugo" Promotions Manager Hasmin Marable confirmed that Richard's former love-team partner, Chynna Hortaleza, replaced Bianca. Chynna, newcomer Isabel Oli and Taiwanese actress Jo Chen will all play leading ladies to Richard's characters.

Isabel Oli, who appeared opposite Piolo Pascual in Max's Restaurant's "Isabel" commercial series, is also named Isabel in "Sugo."

"She's a simple girl from the province," Isabel said of her character. "She works in a circus. She has no permanent home. She will meet one of Richard's characters and fall for him."

Jo Chen appeared in the series "MY MVP Valentine," "Twin Sisters" and "Lavander," all of which were shown on GMA 7.

The network wars are predicted to intensify as "Sugo" faces ABS-CBN's "Panday." Asked if he was ready to battle in the ratings with the well-loved character made famous by Fernando Poe Jr., Richard had one thing to say: "I was born ready."



RICHARD Gutierrez, lead star, plays two characters: Amante, left, and Miguel

THE MASTER Wong Wai Fai

ISABEL OLI

TRAINERS Lau Tze Ming, Cheung Chi Chuen and Cheung Ping Chuen

---

'Mutya' a battle . . .

From page A2-1

and film director Jeffrey Jeturian spotted the California-raised Liana hosting the Miss Silliman pageant last year and asked her to give Mutya ng Pilipinas a try.

Ilocos Norte's Rochelle Jane Hagunos is only 18 years old, but she is the tallest candidate at 5-foot-9.

"This is my first pageant," said Rochelle, a Nursing freshman at the Mariano Marcos State University. She is an only child who has lived with her grandmother since her parents separated when she was very young.

Another 18-year-old, Arabella Hanesh, has distinct West Asian features that make her stand out. The representative from Pangasinan keeps fit by belly dancing. "It's good for the belly... makes it firm," she explained.

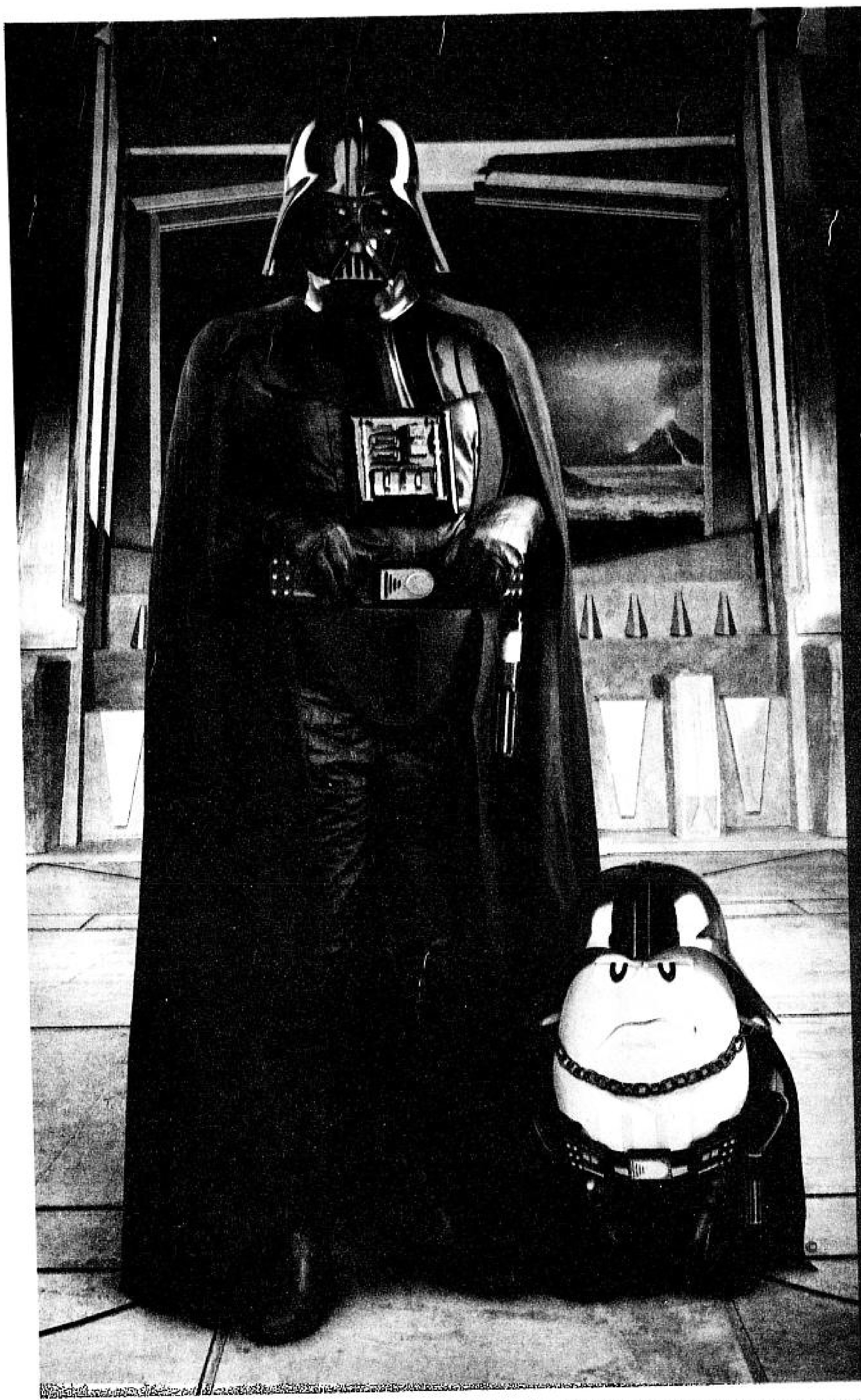
Batangas is represented by Marevel Alcantara, 18. A Tourism student of the Lyceum of Batangas, she landed second in the last Binibining Lungsod ng Batangas pageant.

Lynelle Fariñas was crowned Mutya ng Pilipinas-Mindanao just two weeks ago. The 19-year-old future nurse is a TV host at a station in Zamboanga.

Also competing this year are Carmenliza Nicolosi of Italy, Australia's Rosecel Aguilar, Filipino-German Katherina Koegel and United Kingdom's Elaine Coyle. They are joined by Quezon City's Abigail Cruz, Elizabeth Nacuspag and Hemilyn Escudero, Carmelle Paguia of Zambales, Bulacan's Christelle Reyes, Isabela's Mary Candice Ramos, Kathlyn Valenzuela of Parañaque, Namkeen Hameed of Ilocos Sur and Paula Ruiz of Marikina City.

Mutya ng Pilipinas and Miss Asia Pacific International 2005 fourth runner-up Jedah Hernandez crowns her successor on June 11 at the PTA Tent in Clamshell II, Intramuros. ABC 5 airs the ceremonies on June 12.

SHELLY Wynne Manacsa, 21, California and Annalie Bonda, 20, Canada ROMY HOMILLADA



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ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4.25PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5.10PM)	TV Patrol World (5.35PM)		Meteor Garden Full Edition		Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Ikaw Ang Lahat Sa Akin	Memories Of Bali	Opds	Kampanerang Kuba	Yes Yes Show			Insider
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IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		On Air Tombayan		Direk	Junior Rayes Report	Bestfriends	Celebrity Single	Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
JackTV	Banzai	X-Men	Justice League	Wwe Raw				Fifa!	Just For Laughs	Mad TV		Dr. Katz	Premium Blend	Shorties Watching Shorties	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Mad TV		The Sib Show	Street Smarts
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Yakkity Yak	Chalkzone	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Rugrats
MYX	MYX Firsts	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	My MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Simple Life	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Eliminidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Complete Savages	What I Like About You	Veronica Mars		Last Comic Standing		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Studio 23						Super Gals		Batman Beyond	Beyblade	Wazzup Wazzup	Mutant X	C.S.I. (8:15 PM)		Las Vegas		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me
AXN		The Amazing Race 6		The World's Most Extreme Races		Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki			Boomtown		Maximum Exposure (Season I)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 5)		Fear Factor (Season V)		CSI: NY (Season I)	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Elvis By The Presley's				Elvis 68 Special		Friends	Elvis By The Presley's
CNN		Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		Your World Today	
National Geographic		Showreel Asia		Taboo		Dangerous Jobs		Egypt Detectives: Mystery of The Pharaoh's Stone	Africa From The Ground Up	Wow		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Showreel Asia		Deep Jungle	
Solar Sports				TV Shopping		FIVB Montreux '05 Volley Masters				WTA '05 Nasdaq			Sports Desk	NBA Greatest Game				Vintage NBA	
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special 101 Most Starlicious Makeovers		You're Invited	Life & Style		Style Star	Nigella Bites II	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO				The Guys			Enough (5.20PM)			Sic The Mark Unleashed				Raiders Of The Lost Ark				The Rundown (10.55PM)	
Star Movies		Shooting Stars (3.15 PM)				Hannah And Her Sisters (4.50PM)			Face/Off (6.40PM)					Nature Unleashed: Avalanche			Rapid Fire (10.35PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Static Shock	Mucha Lucha!	Megas XLR	Zoids Fusers	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Johnny Bravo	Time Squad	Thundercats	Mucha Lucha!	Megas XLR
ESPN		World Tenpin Masters '05								US Open Golf Championship '00 Official Film		Sportscenter Asia	World Snooker Tour China Open						Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	So Little Time	Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Princess of Thieves			So Little Time	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Tuck Everlasting	
Cinemax				Hood Rat			The Hard Way				Lost Treasure			Blizzard			Hercules And The Amazon Women		
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Missing		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	The Nanny	Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Missing		Just Desserts			Strong Medicine (10:35PM)		Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Raising the Mammoth		Unsolved History		Hyperspace With Sam Neil Life		Hour China		Mythbusters		Science Of Star Wars		Hour Asia	
MTV Philippines			Hangin Out at MTV		MTV Get Spotted		TRL		Backstreet Boys Incomplete	MTV Divas		Wade Robson	Dismissed	Boiling Point	Pimp My Ride	On Board at MTV	Making the Movie Sin City	VH1: Video Collection	
Sports Plus		French Open '05 Quarterfinals						Porsche md.2	Monster Jam		Live Match Boxing				BD 11 Maul	Arena Football Conference Championship			

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Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat pangmulat

alas-10 ng gabi na! Tuwing Huwebes

Ating kababayan
Cheri Mercado

Dito lang sa ABC

INQ TV

Mouth of words, domestic chicken counter and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

'Please make it short... We're running out of town'

HOST: What are the benefits provided by this new bill? Who will be its beneficiaries?

Guest: It will be of good benefit particularly to the old and the elderly!

(You mean, there's a difference?)

* * *

Host: What will you demonstrate for us in our kitchen portion today?

Guest: This time, for working people who are always in a hurry, we will give you fast tips to really cook the cook!

(Whee!)

* * *

Host: And now, our contest winner is about to start the best life of her year.—Ah, best year of her life would be better, wouldn't it?

(Yes, it would!)

* * *

Host: Of all the toothpastes in the market, which one would you recommend?

Guest: To me, definitely, I recommend this one—because it's the best for widening teeth!

(Our teeth are "wide" enough, thanks.)

* * *

Host: Where did you meet your new boyfriend? In a disco? Abroad?

Guest: No, it's really funny, I met him unexpectedly at the airport, at the domestic chicken counter.

(—Where passengers check in their chickens?)

* * *

Host: How are your exports doing now?

Guest: It's wonderful, we have so many repeat sales, as well as many new ones, due to mouth of words!

(*Ay, baliktad!*)

* * *

Host: So, your export line is a big success!

Guest: Thank you!

Host: And it smells so good, too. Viewers, can you smell it? It's so nice!

(Sorry, we don't have Smell-A-Vision.)

* * *

Host: So, the dish is now finished?

Guest: Yes, now we can put it on already off the fire.

(—Make up your mind!)

* * *

Host: To whom do you want to address the mission-vision message of your organization?

Guest: We want to reach and convince to all the men or humans who are watching right now!

(Men or humans? What *are* you talking about?)

* * *

Host: What do you do when many problems seem to assault you all at the same time, making your job so stressful?

Guest: Well, I just grim and bare it!

(How grim can you get?!)

* * *

Host: I hear you covered the launch of a new TV show yesterday? Which show was it?

Co-host: It's a new *teleserye* titled "Kompanyerang Kuba."

(No, 'Panyera, that's *not* the title of the show.)

* * *

Host: What are some of the unusual places you can find in Palawan?

Guest: Ah, well, I think, *andoon ang* dental colony.

(*Ano daw?*)

* * *

Host: One final question for you to answer.

Guest: Ok, I'll try.

Host: But please make it short, because we're running out of town.

(Huh?!)

On Star Movies

SUNDAY, June 12 at 9 p.m., "Stuck on You," starring **Matt Damon, Greg Kinnear** and **Cher**, and directed by Bobby Farrelly.

A couple of conjoined twins are living happy lives despite their unusual connection. Trouble comes when suave Walt decides to pursue an acting career in Hollyweed, and Bob has a panic attack.

June 19 at 9 p.m., "The Statement," with **Michael Caine, Tilda Swinton** and **Jeremy Northam**; directed by **Norman Jewison**.

This powerful political thriller centers on Pierre Brossard (Caine), who as a young man was a war criminal, but has never been brought to trial. Now, 50 years later, a new investigation seeks to convict him. But, will mysterious assassins get to him first?

Feedback

FROM Amarylis R. Oppen of Quezon City: "To compete more favorably with Hollywood blockbusters Filipino films have to get away from their usual story lines, which are sometimes rehashes of American movies, anyway. What we are looking for are films that capture what it is to live in the Philippines at this difficult and complex time, hoping that we get insights that will help us deal with the realities we face..."

SHANG CINEPLEX

① MR.& MRS. SMITH
MTRCB: PG-13
11:15, 2:15, 5:15 LMF

② MR.& MRS. SMITH
MTRCB: PG-13
1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00 LMF

③ COACH CARTER
MTRCB: PG-13
11:50, 2:45, 5:40, 9:00 LMF

④ MADAGASCAR
MTRCB. GP
12.40, 3.00, 5.20, 7:40, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE A LOT LIKE LOVE
MTRCB PG-13 11:25 2:00 4:35 7:10 9:50
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GP

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3 MR. & MRS. SMITH
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4 A LOT LIKE LOVE
PLEASE CALL FOR SCREENING TIME
PG-13

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CINEMA 4 MR. & MRS. SMITH PG13
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cebu cinema 1
1 SIN CITY
2 STARWARS: EPISODE III
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2 SIN CITY
3 MR. & MRS. SMITH
4 STARWARS: EPISODE III
5 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
ARE WE THERE YET?
8 SHUT UP & KISS ME
9 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
10 MR. & MRS. SMITH
11 PREMONITION
12 A LOT LIKE LOVE

sm city fairview
1 ANG LAGUSAN
2 PREMONITION
3 UNLEASHED
4 STARWARS: EPISODE III
5 SHUTTER
6 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
7 MR. & MRS. SMITH
8 MADAGASCAR
9 SIN CITY
10 LA VISA LOCA
11 HOUSE OF WAX
12 A LOT LIKE LOVE

sm north edsa
1 MR. & MRS. SMITH
2 PREMONITION
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
5 LA VISA LOCA
6 A LOT LIKE LOVE
MADAGASCAR
8 SIN CITY

sm city manila
1 UNLEASHED
2 STARWARS: EPISODE III
3 A LOT LIKE LOVE
4 MR. & MRS. SMITH
5 MADAGASCAR
6 MR. & MRS. SMITH
7 LA VISA LOCA
8 HOUSE OF WAX
9 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
10 SIN CITY
11 SHUTTER
12 PREMONITION

sm city sta mesa
1 MR. & MRS. SMITH
2 MADAGASCAR
3 STARWARS: EPISODE III
4 SIN CITY
5 MR. & MRS. SMITH
6 SHUTTER
7 A LOT LIKE LOVE
8 SHUT UP AND KISS ME
9 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
10 PREMONITION

sm city southmall
1 MR. & MRS. SMITH
2 SHUT UP & KISS ME
3 MADAGASCAR
4 POOH'S HEFFALUMP MOVIE
5 PREMONITION
6 SIN CITY
STARWARS: EPISODE III
8 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
9 A LOT LIKE LOVE
10 SHUTTER

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 SHUTTER
2 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 MR. & MRS. SMITH
4 SIN CITY

sm city bicutan
MR. & MRS. SMITH
2 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 MADAGASCAR
4 SIN CITY

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 MR. & MRS. SMITH
2 MR. & MRS. SMITH
3 UNLEASHED
4 THE JACKET
5 HOUSE OF WAX
6 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME

sm city bacoor
1 SHUT UP AND KISS ME
2 COACH CARTER
3 MR. & MRS. SMITH
4 SIN CITY
5 STARWARS: EPISODE III
6 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
7 MADAGASCAR
8 SHUTTER

sm city dasmariñas
UNLEASHED
2 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
MR. & MRS. SMITH

sm city lucena
MR. & MRS. SMITH
2 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 THE INTERPRETER
4 SHAOLIN VS EVIL

sm city baguio
1 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
2 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 MADAGASCAR
4 MR. & MRS. SMITH

sm city marilao
UNLEASHED
SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 A LOT LIKE LOVE
MR. & MRS. SMITH

sm city cagayan de oro
1 MR. & MRS. SMITH
2 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 MADAGASCAR
4 STARWARS: EPISODE III

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 SIN CITY
2 STARWARS: EPISODE III
3 MR. & MRS. SMITH
4 MADAGASCAR
5 BOOGEYMAN
6 COACH CARTER
7 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
8 MR. & MRS. SMITH

sm city iloilo
MR. & MRS. SMITH
RESERVED
3 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
4 MADAGASCAR
HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
MR. & MRS. SMITH
RESERVED
8 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR

sm city davao
1 MR. & MRS. SMITH
2 STARWARS: EPISODE III
UNLEASHED
4 LA VISA LOCA
5 MADAGASCAR
THE AMITYVILLE HORROR

sm city batangas
RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
2 SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME
3 MR. & MRS. SMITH
4 UNLEASHED

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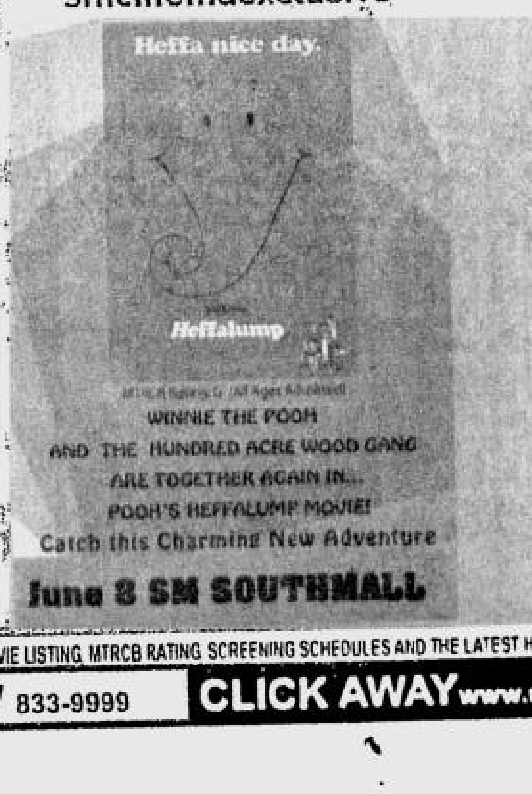

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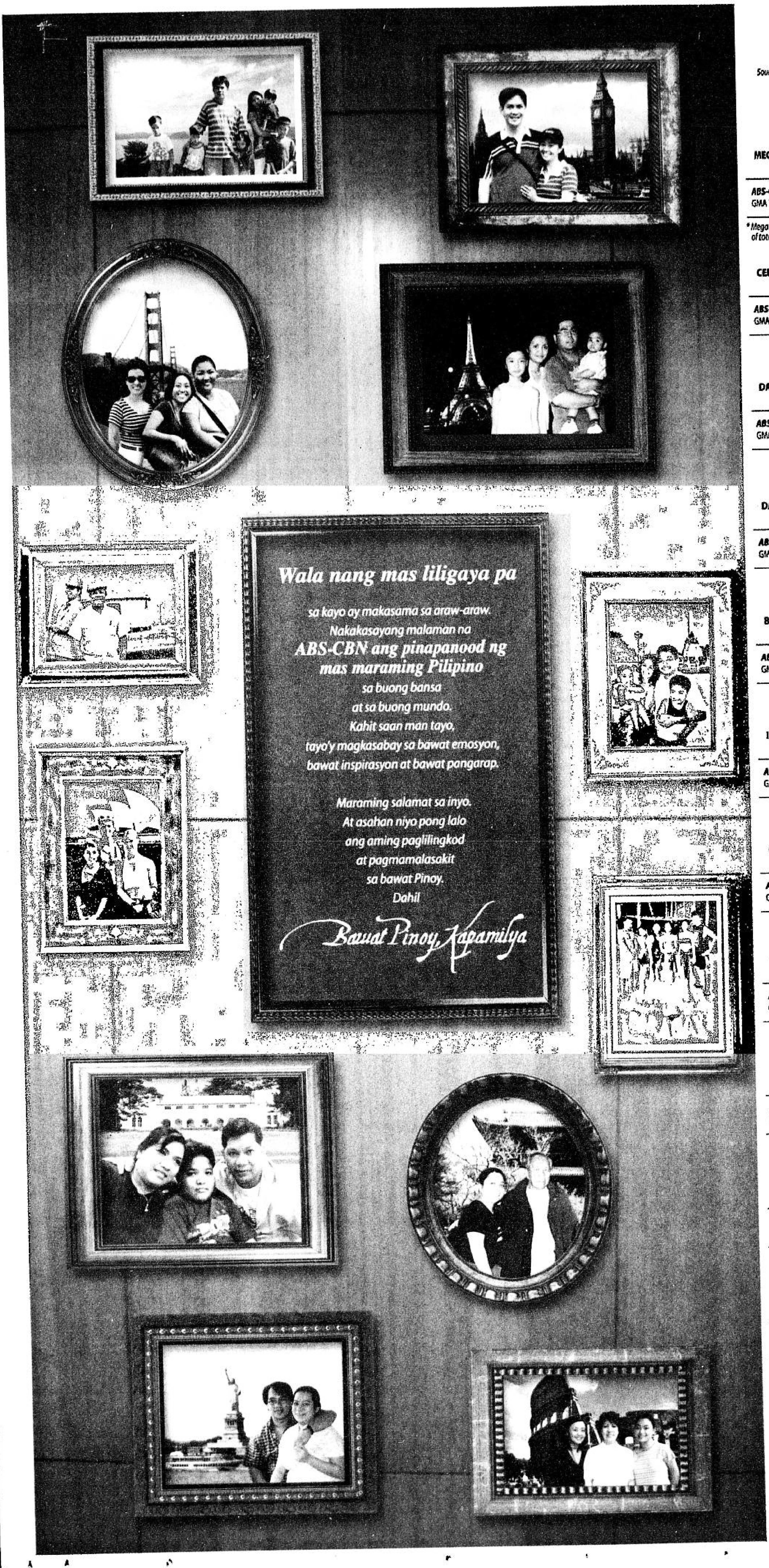


Wala nang mas liligaya pa

sa kayo ay makasama sa araw-araw.
Nakakasayang malaman na
ABS-CBN ang pinapanood ng
mas maraming Pilipino
sa buong bansa
at sa buong mundo.
Kahit saan man tayo,
tayo'y magkasabay sa bawat emosyon,
bawat inspirasyon at bawat pangarap.

Maraming salamat sa inyo.
At asahan niyo pong lalo
ang aming paglilingkod
at pagmamalasakit
sa bawat Pinoy.
Dahil

Bawat Pinoy, Kapamilya

CHANNEL RATINGS
and AUDIENCE SHARE
Source: AGB Nielsen Media Research
and PSRC
Period: 1st Quarter 2005

Source: AGB Philippines

MEGA MANILA

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN*	***13.8%***	***34%***
GMA 7	18.9%	46%

** Mega Manila comprises only 27% of total national TV households.*

Source: NMR

CEBU

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***15.1%***	***49%***
GMA 7	8.7%	28%

Source: NMR

DAGUPAN

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***10.3%***	***40%***
GMA 7	6.4%	25%

Source: NMR

DAVAO

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***21.7%***	***61%***
GMA 7	6.7%	19%

Source: PSRC

BACOLOD

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***36.8%***	***92%***
GMA 7	1.8%	5%

Source: PSRC

ILOILO

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN*	***16.8%***	***42%***
GMA 7	20.1%	50%

Source: PSRC

CAGAYAN DE ORO

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***17.0%***	***56%***
GMA 7	11.3%	37%

Source: PSRC

GENERAL SANTOS

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***22.0%***	***90%***
GMA 7	2.4%	10%

Source: PSRC

LEGASPI

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***32.1%***	***83%***
GMA 7	4.9%	13%

Source: PSRC

NAGA

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***47.6%***	***89%***
GMA 7	4.4%	8%

Source: PSRC

ZAMBOANGA

	Ratings	Audience Share
ABS-CBN	***34.9%***	***67%***
GMA 7	12.4%	24%

ABS-CBN

In The Service Of The Filipino

These Pinoy artists abroad make us all proud

JOSE LLana performed at Sunday's Tony Awards as part of the cast of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," which won Best Book of a Musical (Rachel Sheinkin).

"The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" was nominated in several other categories, including Best Musical, which was awarded to "Monty Python's Spamalot." Llana starred with Lea Salonga in "Flower Drum Song" and recorded and released an album in the Philippines.

In "Spelling Bee," Llana portrays contestant Chip Tolentino, who has always been self confident but now that he in his early teens, his hormones kick in at the most inappropriate moments. The Filipino-American performs a number about his embarrassing "protuberance."

In the Tony Awards telecast, Llana was seen in a *barong* as he and his fellow cast members stood and applauded when "Putnam County Spelling..." won in two categories. He stood out in an audience where majority of the males wore black tuxes or suits.

From Tondo to H'wood

US-based Pinay actress Giovannie Pico is in the cast of the top-rated Hollywood soap opera, "ER."

Pico won the plum role of an Asian medical student in NBC's long-running series, whose 11th season premiered in October.

Giovannie Anne-Cabangis-Espiritu in real life, the Tondo girl was born to a family of architects and engineers. She grew up in San Francisco, California, and went to school at St. Ignatius College.

She had formal training at the Adda Clavenger Theater School, American Conservatory Theater, Lefler Academy of the Arts, Bressi & Company and Nancy Berwid's First Take Company.

As a child in San Francisco, she played roles in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," "Peter Pan," "The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast" and "Pinocchio."

Later, she landed the female leads independent film productions "Mail Order Bride," "Love, in the End," "Broken Wings," "I Adore You," Counting the Days" and "Seasons Under the Bridge."

Giovannie is expected to visit Manila at the end of this month.

TFC Idols

Filipinos in the Middle East have just crowned their very own singing idols via TFC's (The Filipino Channel) "Pop Star" search 2005.

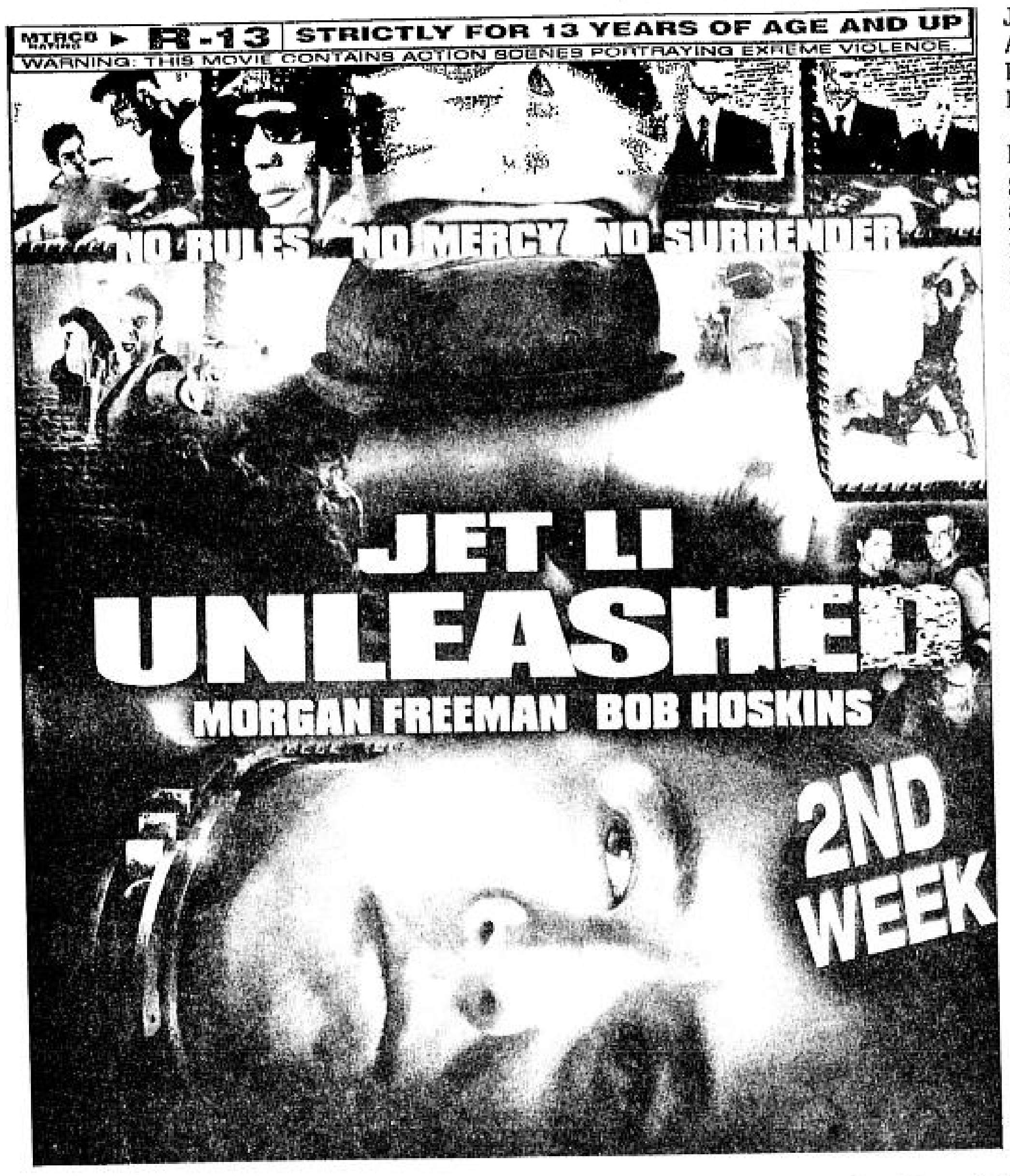
Cjarah Jumawan of Dubai and "Wild Card" Bruce Osorio of Sharjah emerged winners in the adult and junior categories, respectively, in the competition.

Judges during the finals held in Dubai were musical director Louie Ocampo and singers Erik Santos, Rachel Alejandro and Jerome. Agot Isidro and Randy Santiago hosted the show.

"We were delighted with the crowd's overwhelming reception of our talents," said Jeffrey Remigio, ABS-CBN Global AVP for Manila operations. The search was launched by ABS-CBN Global's Middle East office last year.

(Visit www.abs-cbnglobal.com or www.tfcpopstar.com)

FACES of success, clockwise from above: Giovannie Pico cast in "ER"; Jose Llana performed at Tony Awards; Bruce Osorio and Cjarah Jumawan, TFC "Pop Star" 2005 champions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2ND WEEK

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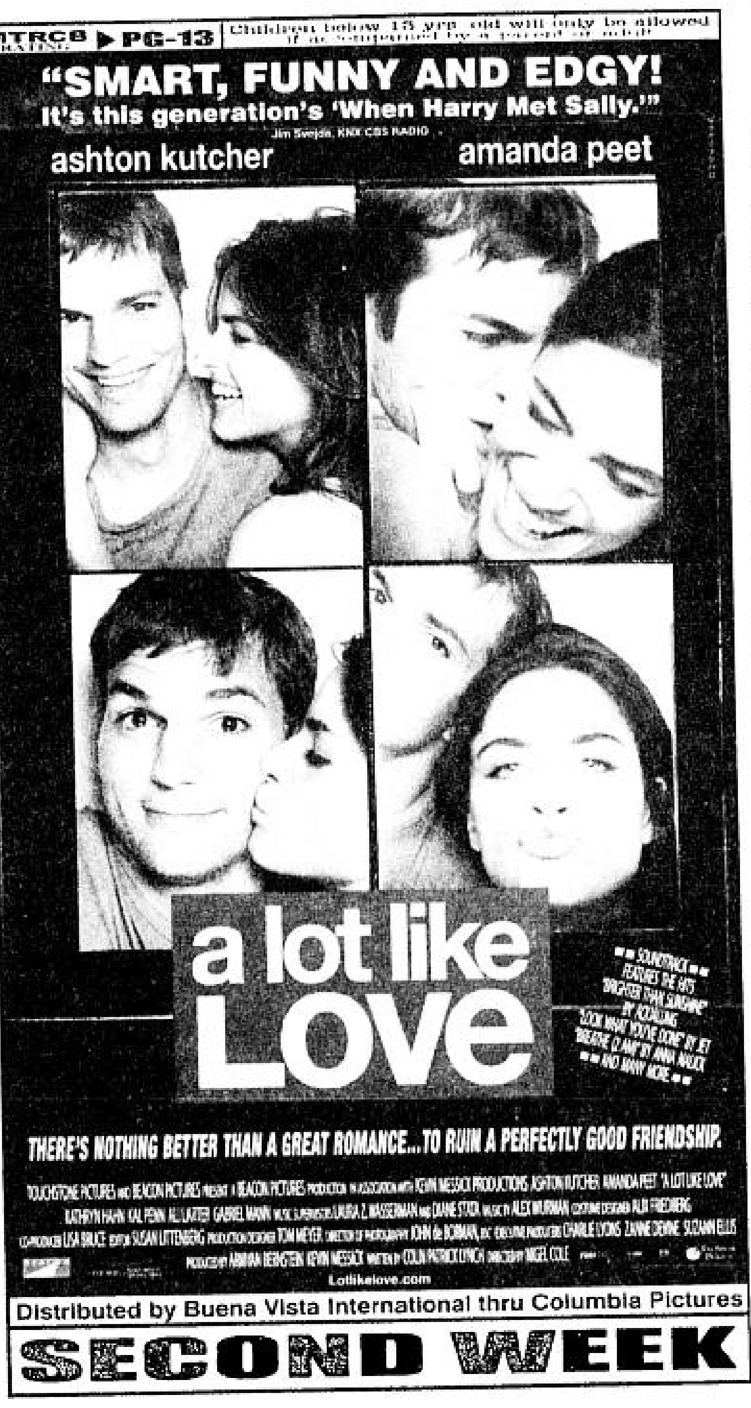
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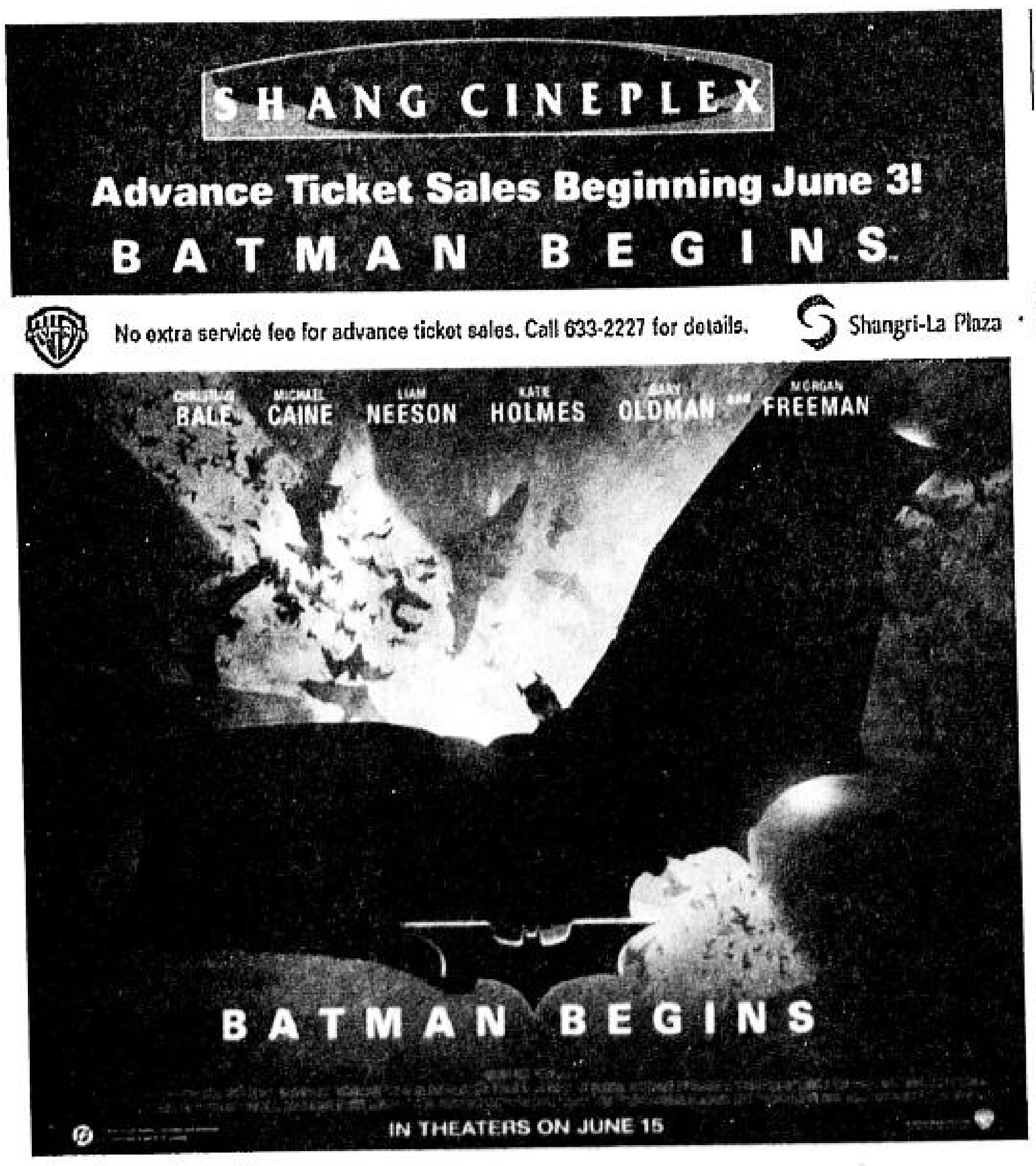
SECOND WEEK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BATMAN BEGINS
IN THEATERS ON JUNE 15

OPENS JUNE 22
Can they survive the wedding day?
Michael Vartan
Jane Fonda
Jennifer Lopez
MONSTER-in-LAW
THE YEAR'S #1 ROMANTIC COMEDY

TOM Cruise accepted the Generation Award from girlfriend Katie Holmes. AP

DARYL Hannah, winner for Best Fight Scene with her director, Quentin Tarantino. REUTERS

Spoofs at MTV awards

LOS ANGELES—There was fun and a rare hint of nostalgia in the youth-focused MTV Movie Awards on Saturday night.

The cable network gave its first lifetime achievement trophy to Tom Cruise and honored the 1985 film "The Breakfast Club."

Cruise accepted the award from girlfriend Katie Holmes, who poked fun at his "Oprah" appearance by dropping down on one knee in and asking the crowd, "Should I go get him?"

Hilary Swank introduced a reunion of four members of "The Breakfast Club" cast.

Star Molly Ringwald said the movie was made for the MTV generation—"For you!"

Dustin Eminem

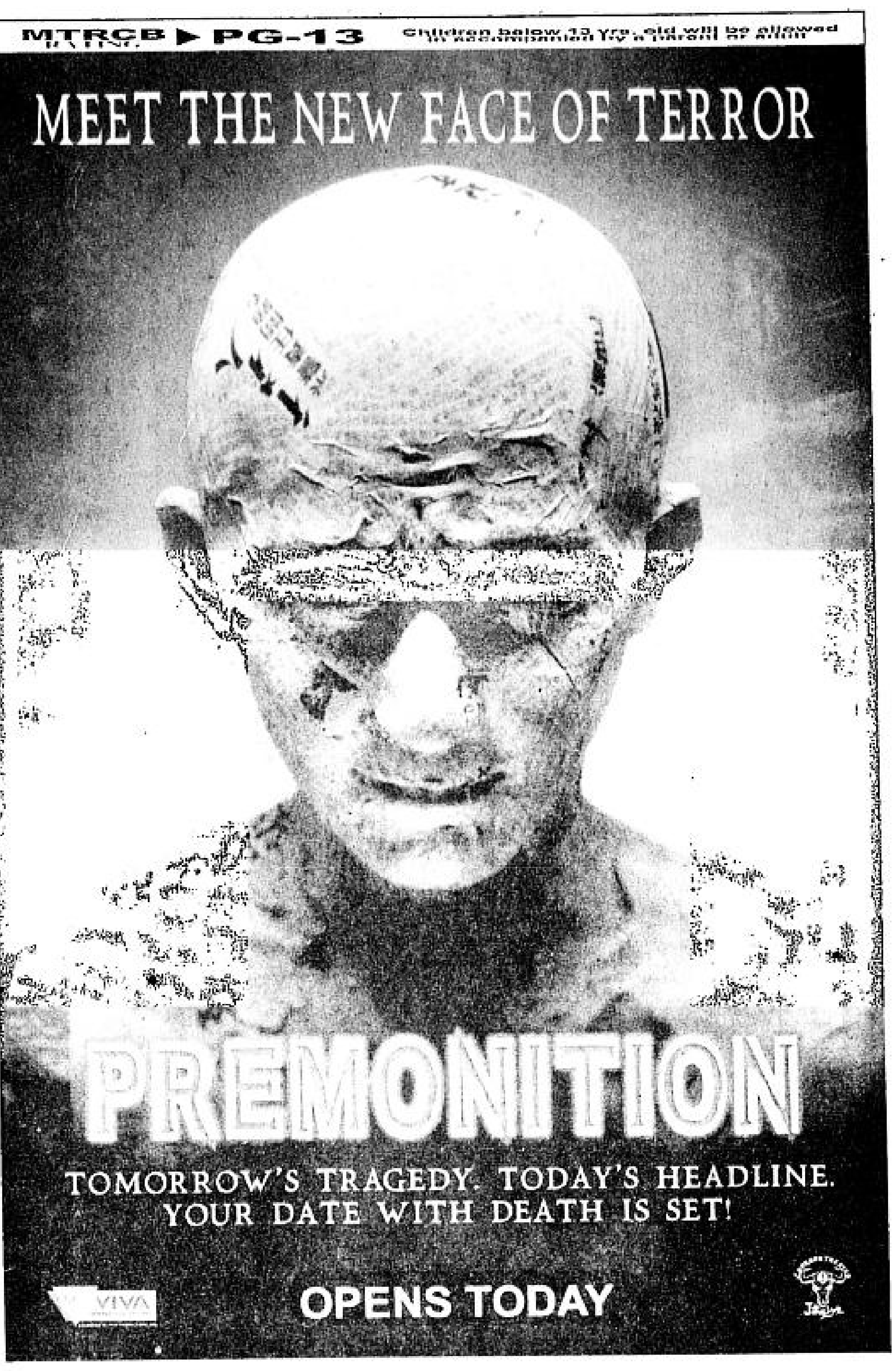
Dustin Hoffman, who won for comedic performance ("Meet the Fockers"), said he kept in touch with the youth by copying Eminem. He grabbed his crotch between thank-you's.

"Napoleon Dynamite" was Best Movie.

Other winners included Leonardo DiCaprio, Best Male Performance in "The Aviator" and Daryl Hannah and Uma Thurman, Best Fight in "Kill Bill 2."

Child actress Dakota Fanning won Best Frightened Performance ("Hide and Seek"). She said of her Golden Popcorn trophy: "This is the best popcorn I've ever had."

The awards handed out at the Shrine Auditorium were based on fan votes. *AP*



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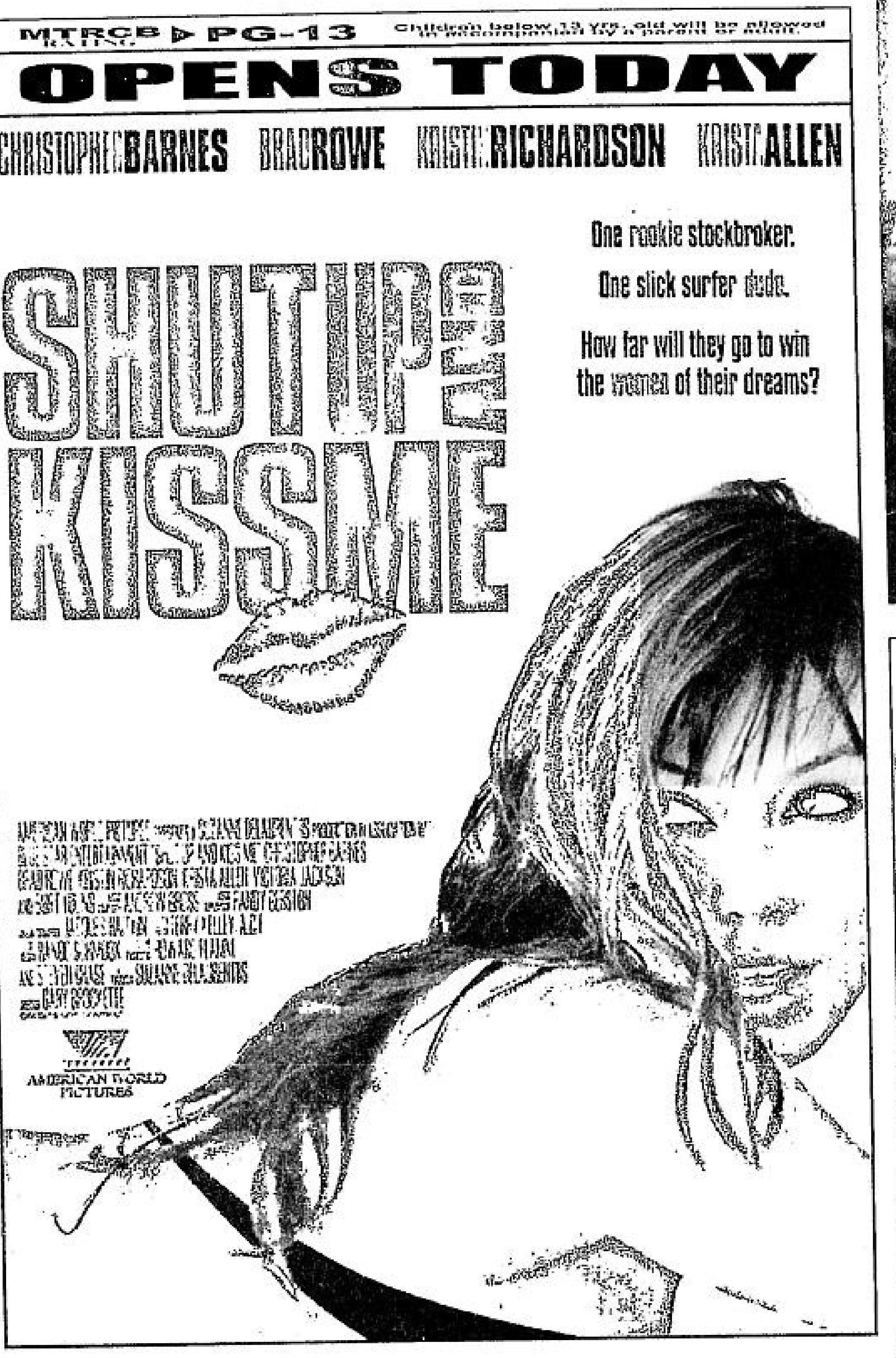
VIVA
OPENS TODAY



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One slick surfer dude.
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9pm

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9pm

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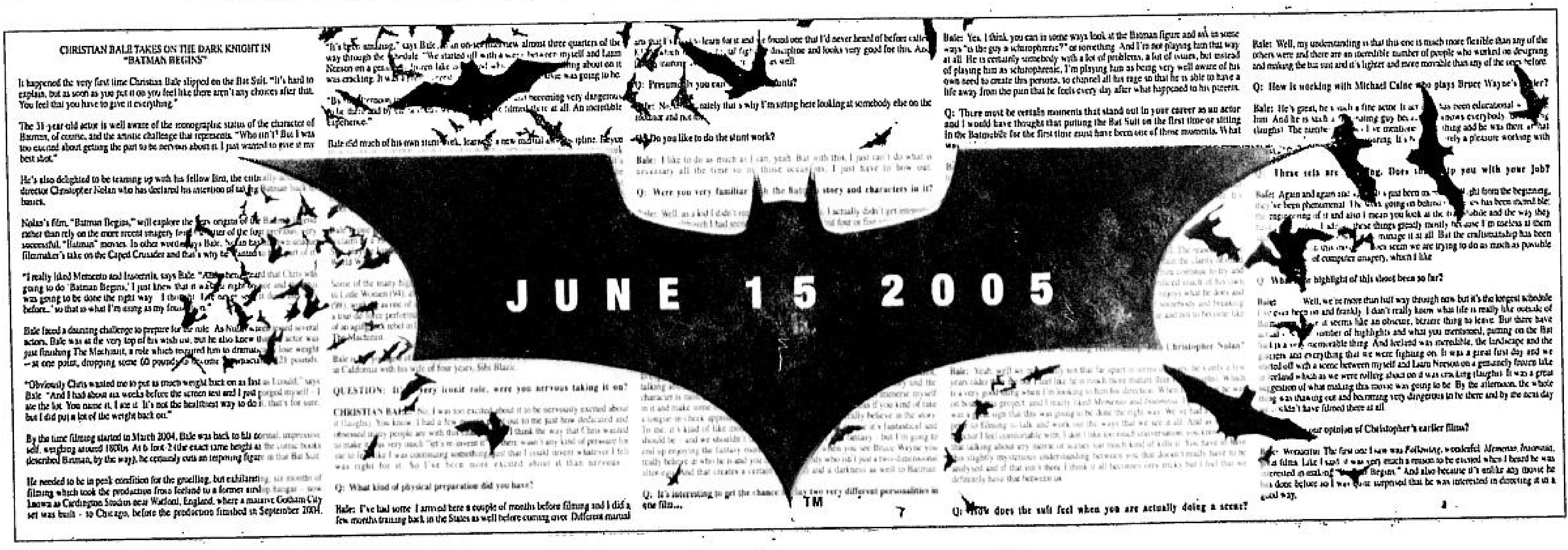

CHRISTIAN BALE TAKES ON THE DARK KNIGHT IN "BATMAN BEGINS"
JUNE 15 2005

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CATEGORY	SHOW NAME	FREQ	KEYWORD
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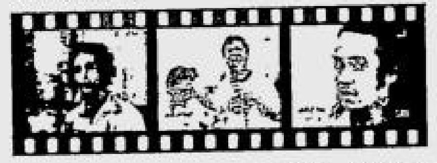

CATEGORY	SHOW NAME	FREQ	KEYWORD
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	Idol Ko Si Kap	weekly	ON GMATV IDOL
	Bahay Mo Ba'To?	weekly	ON GMATV BAHAY
	Nuts Entertainment	weekly	ON GMATV NUTS
	Pinoy Pop Superstar	weekly	ON GMATV PINOYPOP
	Startalk	weekly	ON GMATV STALK
	S-Files	weekly	ON GMATV SFILES
	Wag Kukurap	weekly	ON GMATV WKURAP
	Daddy Di Do Du	weekly	ON GMATV DADDY
	Lagot Ka Isusumbong Kita	weekly	ON GMATV LAGOTKA

CATEGORY

Entertainment:

Text ON STARCLIP to 2346

Entertainment Content	Gagamboy, Pido Dida, Stairway To Heaven, Sinungaling Mong Puso (varies weekly)

Anime:

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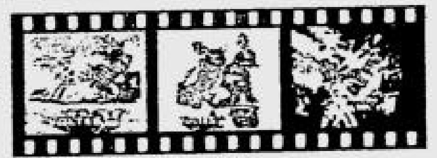
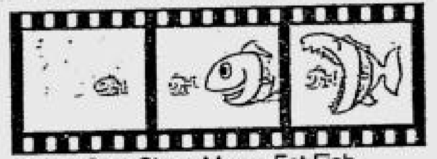


Anime Content	Voltes V, Daimos, Zoids (varies weekly)

Cartoons:

Text ON TOONSVC to 2375



Cartoon Content	Happy Sun, Sleep Moon, Eat Fish (varies daily)

Creatures:

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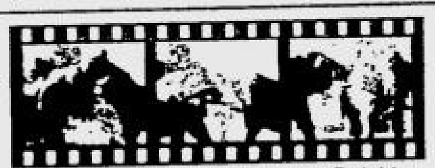

Creature Content	Sharks, Seals, Lions, Elephants, Dolphins, Rhinos, Leopards, Crocodiles, Hippos (varies weekly)

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COCKTALES/B3

WHAT'S INSIDE
Vehicle sales up 10.8% /B2
RP, Japan to sign free trade deal this year /B6

Inflation remained at a high 8.5% in May

By Michelle V. Remo

CONSUMER prices continued to rise by a steep 8.5 percent in May from a year earlier, or much higher than the government's target, as the high cost of oil in the world market led to adjustments in the cost of essential goods and services.

Inflation also stood at an average of 8.5 percent for the January-to-April period. This was way above the 5- to 6-percent official target of the government.

"Obviously, a big part of it (accelerated inflation) was caused by high oil prices. It's something we have no control over, especially since we are a country that imports oil heavily," said Ernesto Pernia, an economist from the University of the Philippines.

The benchmark Dubai crude averaged at a high $45.39 a barrel in May. It peaked at its historic month high of $47.20 a barrel in April.

On the local market, retail prices of kerosene went up from P27.41 a liter the previous month to P28.03, while price of diesel increased from P26.79 a liter to P27.40. Gasoline products, however, softened: premium from P31.27 a liter to P30.51; unleaded, from P30.69 to P29.91, and regular, from P29.66 to P28.92.

With inflation staying at a high 8.5 percent, National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo Neri said the government should be cautious in allowing increases in transport fares, electricity rates and wages, as these could create more inflationary pressure.

Early in the year, the Neda conceded that the inflation target for the year was no longer realistic as prices of oil in the world market did not subside as expected. Economists earlier predicted that oil prices, which began to shoot up in the second half of last year, would start tapering off in early 2005.

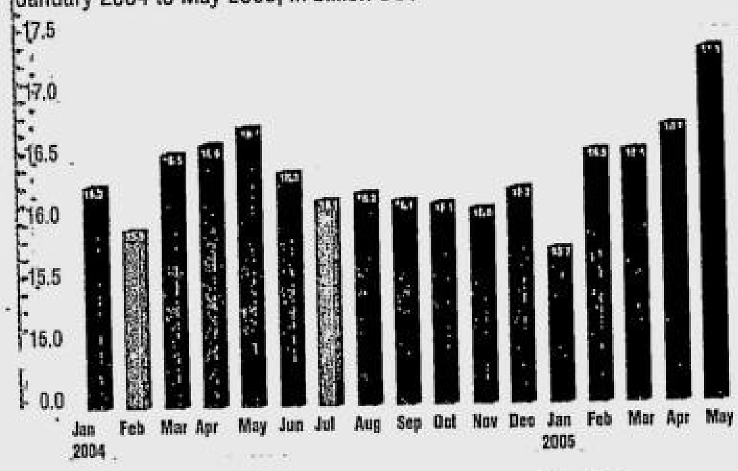
According to the National Statistics Office, the inflation in May, compared with that in April, was attributed largely to the accelerated increase in the cost of fuel, light and water, and miscellaneous items at 20.1 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively.

Inflation for other commodity groups actually slowed down: food, beverage and tobacco, from 7 to 6.9 percent; clothing, from 3.8 to 3.7 percent; services, from 14.5 to 14.3 percent; and housing and repairs was kept at its April figure of 4.8 percent.

But while inflation was still at 8.5 percent in the first five months of the year, the government's economic team still has not adjusted the full-year inflation target. Economic officials have become cautious in adjusting macroeconomic and fiscal goals, believing it erodes the government's target-setting credibility.

CONSUMER/B2

GROSS INTERNATIONAL RESERVES
January 2004 to May 2005, in billion US$



Forex reserves hit 3-year high of $17.3B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES' gross international reserves breached the $17-billion mark in end-May, posting the strongest foreign exchange build-up in three years buoyed by inflows from the government's fresh foreign borrowing.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Officer-in-Charge Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday announced that the five-month GIR level stood at $17.34 billion, 3.7 percent higher than the previous month's $16.72 billion.

It was also better than the $16.74 billion in reserves as of end-May last year.

"The current GIR level, the highest since April 2002, was adequate to cover about 3.9 months' worth of imports of goods and payments of services and income," Tetangco said.

"This level was also equivalent to 3.7 times the country's short-term debt based on original maturity and 1.8 times based on residual maturity," he said.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity pertains to outstanding short-term external debt on original maturity plus principal payments on medium- and long-term loans of the public and private sectors falling due within the next 12 months.

The GIR, consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from multilateral institutions and foreign investments, is seen as an indicator of the ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy.

"Inflows from deposit by the national government of its proceeds from the reopening of global bonds largely boosted the end-May 2005 GIR," Tetangco said.

"These inflows, however, were partly offset by the foreign exchange requirements for repayments of maturing national government and BSP obligations," he said.

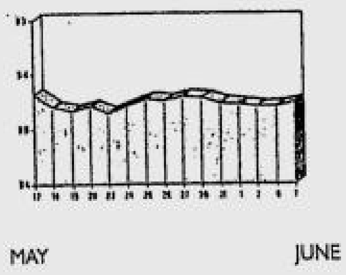
Last month, the Philippines raised $750 million through the sale of additional 2015 and 2030 inter-

FOREX/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



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As of 5 p.m., June 7, 2005

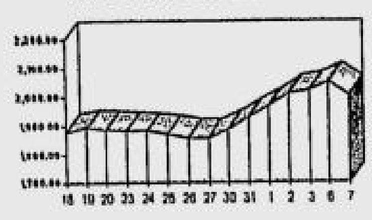
¥ 106.79 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., June7, 2005

GOLD: $426.80-427.30
per ounce Hong Kong, June 7, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares end down 2.3% on political woes

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES closed sharply lower yesterday, ending seven consecutive sessions of gains, on a technical correction triggered by a slew of political concerns, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended down 48.02 points, or 2.3 percent, at 2,003.02, after rising 10 percent over the past seven sessions.

Blue chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was the most actively traded stock, falling 3.3 percent to close at P1,590, after setting a record closing high of P1,645 Monday.

"Political concerns became a very comfortable excuse for the market to undergo a technical correction following a seven-day run-up. The market was really due for a pause," said AB Capital Securities research director Jose Vistan.

Decliners led gainers 55 to 31, while 45 stocks were unchanged.AP

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PPI resumes tuition payments

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PRE-NEED firm Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI) of the Yuchengco family yesterday resumed its tuition aid to plan holders.

PPI earlier announced that it would resume tuition payments over the weekend. But it was only yesterday that the beneficiaries were able to secure the tuition aid.

PPI tapped the P250-million contribution of Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco to partially settle its tuition obligation this school year.

PPI said in a statement that about 400 beneficiaries yesterday went to the Philippine Trade Training Center on Roxas Boulevard to get their checks.

Sources said that of the total 15,954 plan holders availing of the tuition aid this year, about 72 percent have already secured their checks.

This translated to about P426 million in tuition aid which PPI released to its plan holders.

PPI's tuition obligation for this school year amounts to P591 million. The pre-need firm has yet to release P165 million, sources said.

PPI tapped Yuchengco's P250-million contribution and the court-approved tuition support of P341 million to settle its plan holders fees.

PPI spokesperson Jeanette C. Tecson said in a statement that "the [tuition payment] is consistent with PPI's desire to address the needs of its availing planholders."

According to Tecson, PPI is continuing its tuition support in spite of the confusion brought about by the Securities and Exchange Commission's move to revoke the articles of incorporation of Lifetime Plans Inc., PPI's sister company which handles fixed value plans.

As a result of the SEC move, PPI temporarily stopped the tuition payment of its plan holders.

PPI had said SEC's order to revoke LPI's incorporation would affect PPI's rehabilitation.

PPI's petition to suspend payments and undergo rehabilitation is still pending before a local court.

4-yr T-bond slips to 10.225%

THE COST of the government's four-year borrowing further dipped by 48.7 basis points yesterday, as the market scrambled for risk-free government securities in the absence of other attractive investment options.

The four-year Treasury bond fetched an average rate of 10.225 percent, compared with the 10.712 percent recorded in May.

Tenders reached P12.945 billion—three times higher than the government's debt offering of only P4 billion.

The decline in the four-year T-bond rate mirrored the downward trend in the interest rate for short-term government securities. Treasury bill rates declined across the board for the seventh consecutive week last Monday, with the benchmark 91-day T-bill rate falling to 5.691 percent.

Michelle V. Remo

Auto sales up 10.8% for first 5 months

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL vehicle assemblers have reported a 10.8-percent year-on-year growth for the first five months this year, due to the introduction of new vehicle models and the success of their promotional activities.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines (Campi) and the Truck Manufacturers Association said in a joint report that they sold a total of 38,315 units from January to May.

In the same period in 2004, a total of 34,585 passenger cars and commercial vehicles were sold.

The number of units sold in the first five months account for 40 percent of the local industry's sales forecast of 95,000 units for the entire year.

Campi and TMA said passenger car sales went up by 9.1 percent in the first five months to 14,280 units from 13,089 units in the same period last year.

Toyota Motors Philippines Corp. cornered the market with a 35.2-percent share, selling 13,482 units in the first five months.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. ranked second with 15.3 percent of the market. MMPC sold 5,848 vehicles.

Isuzu Philippines Corp. ranked third with a 10.3-percent share of the market. Isuzu sales reached 3,955 units in the first five months.

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- LCD TV
- Microphone
- Mixer
- MP3 Player
- PDP TV
- Plasma & Color TV
- Rice Cooker
- Satellite Receiver
- Washing Machine & Spin Dryer
- Water Heater
- Refrigerator

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- Auto Accessories
- Cars & Trucks
- Cool & Warmer Box
- Dirt bike
- Electronic-Cycle
- Gas & Electric Scooters
- Motorcycle
- Performance Parts
- Spare Parts
- Tricycle

COMMUNICATION & AUTOMATION
- Automatic Teller Machine
- Batteries & Chargers
- Communication Equipment
- UPS Power Supply
- Voltage Regulator
- Wires

FOOD EQUIPMENT & PACKAGING MACHINERY
- Cup Sealing Machine
- Deep Fryers
- Food Processors
- Hand Mixers
- Ice Cream Machine
- Jug Kettles
- Meat Grinders
- Packaging Machine
- Popcorn Machine
- Rice Mill Equipment
- Wine Coolers

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- Ballast
- Exhibition Boards
- Hand Tools
- Paint and Stylebook
- Scale
- Lawn Mower

INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY & CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT
- Air-cooled Diesel Engines
- Bearing
- Blow Molding Machine
- Blower
- Construction Machines
- Diesel Engines
- Diverter
- Electrical Machinery
- Engine Sets
- Folding Machine
- Gasoline Engines
- Hydraulic Press
- Metal Forming Machine
- Oil Cylinder
- Power Sprayer
- Rotary Feeder
- Vibrator Shaft
- Walking Tractor
- Wheel Loader

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- HID Lamps
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Inflation

From page B1

Pernia warned that should inflation remain at high levels, the government's growth targets for the year might not be achieved. He explained that high commodity prices dampen consumption, thus causing a slowdown in the growth of exports and the economy in general.

For 2005, the government set a 10-percent growth target for exports and a 5.3- to 6.3-percent growth in gross domestic product. First-quarter data, however, had been off the target, as exports only grew by 3.6 percent, while GDP growth was a mere 4.6 percent.

Pernia said there was not much that could be done to temper inflation, considering that oil prices were an external factor. But the government and the private sector could implement energy conservation programs to reduce dependence on imported oil, he said.

"How long oil prices will remain high is something nobody can tell except the Opec (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries)," he said.

Forex

From page B1

national bonds to help the government plug its chronic budget gap.

Lead managers Deutsche Bank AG, HSBC and JP Morgan Chase & Co. sold $250 million of the 10-year paper at a price of 101.375 and $500 million in 25-year bonds at a price of 97.875. These carried yields of 8.661 percent and 9.726 percent, respectively.

Meanwhile, the BSP's net international reserves during the same period, inclusive of revaluation of reserve assets and reserve-related liabilities, expanded by 4.3 percent to $16.26 billion from $15.58 billion a month ago.

The BSP recently raised its GIR target range this year by $1 billion to $16-$17 billion, taking advantage of much-improved foreign inflows to beef up its war chest against rising oil prices.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 7, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4	4	3.9	3.9	13,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	33.5	33.5	32.5	33	941,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50.5	51	49.5	50.5	946,700
China Banking Corp.	770	790	770	790	6,670
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	200
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.64	0.64	800,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	51.5	51.5	50.5	50.5	17,400
International Exch. Bank	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	234,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	31.5	32	649,000
Prudential Bank	400	400	400	400	50
Philippine National Bank	34.5	34.5	33.5	33.5	160,200
Phil. Savings Bank	32	34	32	34	2,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	28	28	28	28	154,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2510	2520	2510	2515	2,110
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	141,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1765	1765	1725	1725	1,180
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	56,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.1	1.12	5,261,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	890	890	865	865	1,590
Ipeople Inc.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	34,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.055	0.05	0.0525	7,300,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	220,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	45,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.35	3.45	1,085,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1635	1635	1590	1590	147,850
Ivantage Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.66	0.68	350,000
Philweb Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	162,800,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	3,300
Manila Electric Co. B	25.5	25.5	24.5	24.5	482,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.7	6.7	7,135,000
Petron Corp.	3.45	3.45	3.3	3.3	5,564,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.06	2.06	79,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.24	1.32	1.24	1.32	16,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8.3	8.3	8.1	8.1	452,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	10,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.02	1.06	1.02	1.06	47,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	1,030,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.65	3.65	320,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	60,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	31,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	31	31	30	30	35,000
Pancake House Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	20,000
RFM Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.84	0.84	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59	59	58.5	59	19,500
San Miguel Corp. B	93	93	92.5	92.5	43,200
Universal Robina Corp.	15	15	15	15	166,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	110,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.009	20,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.0095	0.0085	0.0095	18,000,000
Ayala Corp.	370	370	360	360	47,350
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.5	0.52	0.49	0.52	200,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5	5.1	4.9	5.1	987,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.035	0.035	0.032	0.035	30,700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.1	2.1	1,774,000
APC Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	26,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	50,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	12	12	12	12	4,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	230,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.22	1.1	1.18	59,102,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	70,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	730,000
CADP Group Corp.	1	1	1	1	30,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.215	0.215	650,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	1,390,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.75	2.8	1,708,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	100,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9.2	9.2	8.9	9	456,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	53	53	49.5	49.5	280,900
Global Equities Inc.	0.095	0.095	0.09	0.095	2,700,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	500,000
Ionics Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.55	3.5	3.55	2,159,000
Medco Holdings	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.5	1.52	1.5	1.5	8,294,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39	16,960,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.27	0.2	0.27	930,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	100,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	100,000
SM Investments Corp.	255	255	252.5	255	225,040
South China Resources Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	20,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	70,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.215	0.2	0.2	12,130,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	1,950,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	8,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	42,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.24	1.24	4,339,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	1,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.85	470,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.26	1.26	3,695,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	179,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	500	500	500	500	50
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.1	8.1	4,649,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	20,000
C & P Homes Inc	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	4,950,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.235	0.235	0.225	0.23	7,810,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	2,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.52	1.52	9,853,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	15,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.24	1,800,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	2,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	740,000
SM Development Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.48	1.48	170,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	8	8	6,908,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.84	0.88	0.84	0.88	50,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.85	0.9	0.85	0.9	160,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	134,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.1	6	5.1	5.9	5,630,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.4	118,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.33	10,600,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.34	0.36	0.33	0.35	15,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	134,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.022	0.02	0.022	77,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.007	202,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.94	0.99	0.94	0.99	1,490,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.06	1.18	1.06	1.16	6,737,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	34	34	33	33	214,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.22	0.235	0.22	0.235	360,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	4,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	38,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	22,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	250,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	17,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.4	2.42	2.4	2.4	67,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.155	0.155	3,670,000

DISCLOSURES

ARIES Prime Resources Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 29, 2 p.m. at the West Room, Manila Golf Club, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 17 are entitled to notice and vote at the meeting.

***

PCI Leasing & Finance Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 20, 9:30 a.m. at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Mezzanine Floor, Equitable PCI Bank Tower I, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of June 10 are entitled to notice and vote at the meeting.

***

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Company disclosed that its senior vice president Victorico P. Vargas, disposed 2,500 shares at P1,550 per share on June 2.

***

EQUITABLE PCI Bank Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 19, 3 p.m. at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Mezzanine Floor, Equitable PCI Bank Tower I, Makati Ave. corner H.V. de la Costa St., Makati City. Stockholders of record as of March 1 are entitled to notice and vote at the meeting.

Compiled by Erika A. Sarmiento, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

June 7, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.815062	1.000000	54.5050
Japan	Yen	0.007630	0.009361	0.5102
United Kingdom	Pound	1.486674	1.824000	99.4171
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104756	0.128525	7.0053
Switzerland	Franc	0.652990	0.801154	43.6669
Canada	Dollar	0.655195	0.803859	43.8143
Singapore	Dollar	0.490440	0.601721	32.7968
Australia	Dollar	0.623947	0.765521	41.7247
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.162026	2.652590	144.5794
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.217350	0.266667	14.5347
Brunei	Dollar	0.488969	0.599916	32.6984
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000104	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020110	0.024673	1.3448
UAE	Dirham	0.221924	0.272279	14.8406
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.226900	66.8722
Argentina	Peso	0.281785	0.345722	18.8436
Denmark	Kroner	0.134417	0.164916	8.9887
India	Rupee	0.018750	0.023004	1.2538
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214519	0.263193	14.3453
Mexico	New Peso	0.074934	0.091937	5.0110
New Zealand	Dollar	0.577567	0.708617	38.6232
South Africa	Rand	0.121564	0.149147	8.1293
Korea	Won	0.000813	0.000997	0.0543
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026166	0.032103	1.7498

Spanish retail invasion

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

FASHIONISTA fans of Mango should have more reason to rejoice.

Zara, another "cheap" chic clothing store chain from Spain, is opening a store in Rockwell by October.

Zara's Philippine franchisee, Stores Specialists of the Rustans Group, has taken out full-page ads in the Sunday papers for staff openings from retail manager to sales assistants and cashiers.

Unlike Mango, another popular Spanish clothing chain that caters only to women, Zara's lineup includes not only men and children's clothes, but also, through a sister store, home furnishings.

According to the grapevine, Zara will take up 1,500 square meters of store space to be vacated by Fully Booked, the upscale bookstore, plus a host of other adjoining shops.

Fully Booked, in turn, will transfer by July to the now shuttered Dish restaurant complex, which is 50 percent bigger than the ground floor space that the upscale bookstore is now occupying.

A subsidiary of the Spanish textile giant El Grupo Inditex, Zara plans to initially open two stores in the country, with the second shop to be located either in Glorietta or in the Edsa Plaza mall in Ortigas.

The Rockwell opening coincides with the opening of two Zara stores in Jakarta, part of the aggressive regional and worldwide expansion as the clothing store chain celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

As of March, Zara had established 756 stores in 55 countries, part of the 2,377-store Inditex empire. Mango had 768 stores worldwide as of end-2004, five of which are in the Philippines.

Before Mango, the last significant Spanish retail presence in the country, way back in the '60s, was El Corte Ingles, Spain's biggest department store chain.

Out of township

WEIGHED down by foreign debt, Kuok Philippine Properties has decided to abandon its ambitious 946-hectare township project in Carmona and Silang towns in Cavite and will consequently seek shareholders' approval for this decision next week.

The Malaysian-controlled company plans to swap its entire stake in a land subsidiary that owns the large Cavite property in exchange for the buyer assuming the balance of a $61.4-million (more than P3.3 billion) loan with another Kuok company.

The foreign loan carries an interest rate burden of 7 percent a year and will fall due in March 2007.

KPPI chair Edward Kuok Khoon Loong said the listed company is now talking with several parties on the swap proposal.

With the debt burden gone, KPPI can concentrate on developing its resort-oriented pieces of property in Tagaytay City, Mactan, Naic, Cavite and Mabini, Batangas.

Money-go-round

- WOMAN, the upscale department store of the downscale Plaza Fair Group, is willing to shrink and sub-lease the ground floor of its lone store in Glorietta.
- AN electronics superstore similar to Frye's in the United States will be opened by a Korean businessman in the former PriceSmart warehouse store in Ortigas.
- THE ANDRES, Marcelo, Padernal, Guerrero and Paras Law Offices are transferring to the Philippine National Bank building in Roxas Boulevard to share the same roof as their most famous client, Vice President Noli de Castro.

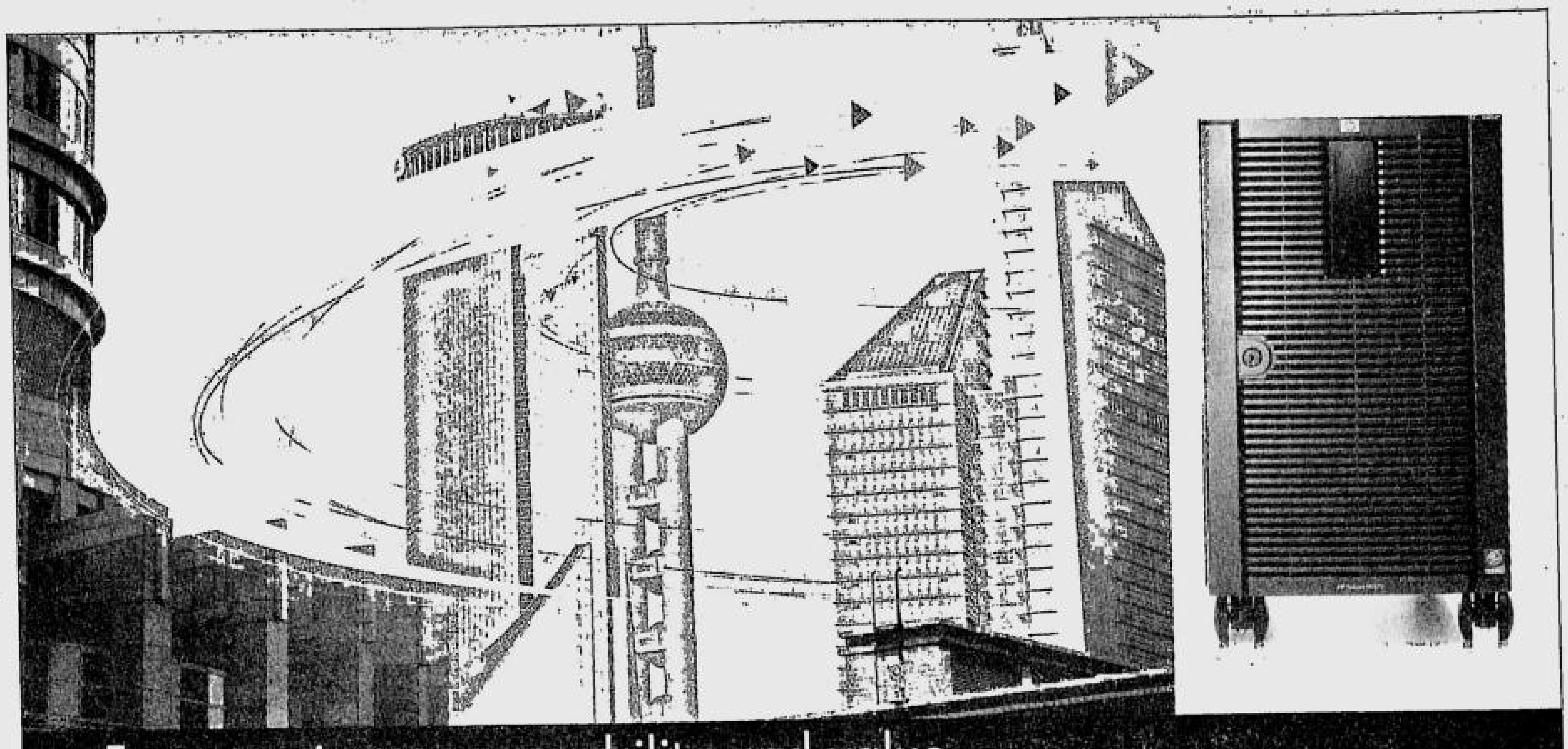
Heard through the grapevine

RCBC has put on the block the 15-story 6780 Ayala Avenue building, formerly owned by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

Recently refurbished, the three-decade-old office building has a 2,400-square-meter footprint and a gross floor area of 21,214 sq.m.

Asking price: P770 million, or about P36,296 per square meter.

Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)



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- Dual Port Gigabit network adapter
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- Integrated Lights-Out (iLO) Standard Management
- One 72-GB 15,000 rpm U320 SCSI Hot Plug hard disk drive
- Systems Insight Manager, SmartStart, and Automatic Server Recovery 2 (ASR-2) included
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- PCI Gigabit Network Adapter
- Smart Array 6i RAID Controller
- Three 72-GB 15,000 rpm U320 SCSI Hot Plug hard disk drives
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*Source: IDC AP Quarterly Enterprise Server Tracker, Q4 2004.

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Counting the cost of politics in the VAT law-I

By Paul R. Cooper

(Third of a series)

LIKE many tax bills, the bicameral process brought some surprises in the value-added tax (VAT) bill. It also carries no explanations why the amendments were made. This will cause technical problems in the implementation process. Not all of the bicameral amendments are readily interpretable.

The bright note from the bicameral process is the removal of the "no pass through" rule for power. For one, the idea was entirely at odds with the objective of a VAT system. More to the point, nobody could probably work out how the rules should be interpreted in practice.

There were, however, some serious negatives added. The effective 3 percent minimum VAT, which threatens to destroy the very foundation of the VAT system, was discussed in yesterday's article. Also, airline and shipping companies have been granted significant concessions (why?), the secretary of finance may increase the rate of VAT to 12 percent (although exactly when is open to question), and a peculiar "final VAT" has been added for the government. How then does the bill as a whole stack up?

Corporate tax hike

It is unfortunate that the corporate tax rate will increase. The measure creates further negative perceptions on the Philippines at a time when it needs to encourage investments. However, this perception might be mitigated if Congress would pass an effective fiscal incentives bill later this year. In any case, the expected revenues might not be realized, either more activities will shift to economic zones (the substitution effect), or companies will modify their debt structures and reduce their taxable income through higher interest deductions.

The measure to subject Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) to tax is curious, arriving in the bill at the last minute from the floor of the Senate. If Congress did not expressly override the charter of Pagcor, although it is necessary to modify the effect of airline franchises and to amend the charter of National Power Corp., will the Pagcor amendment have any real effect? Score another one for the lawyers to argue.

VAT on power, petroleum

To some extent, the resistance to VAT on power and petroleum may be because commentators failed to appreciate what the effect would be. Let's assume the price of electricity before the VAT changes is P8/kwh. Following the change, electricity companies will be able to claim some input tax credits that previously were a cost because of cascading taxes, which we'll assume to be P0.30/kwh. The price to consumers will increase, but should be adjusted to reflect the ability of power companies to recover input taxes. Thus, the price in the example will increase to around P8.50/kwh, which is an increase of less than 10 percent.

Consider the effect on exporters, such as manufacturers of semiconductors, who expressed concerns the VAT would increase the price of electricity to exporters. If the manufacturer is located in a special economic zone or it exports more than 70 percent of production, it is entitled to pay 0 percent VAT on its inputs. Under current law in the illustration, it pays P8/kwh for electricity. After VAT is imposed, the price reduces to around P7.70 because of the 0 percent VAT.

There are benefits for ordinary businesses also. Although the power company will now charge 10 percent, a VAT-registered business may claim a matching input credit. Thus, the real cost of electricity to business will also drop.

From the government perspective, the real benefit from subjecting power and petroleum to VAT may not be the revenues that are squeezed from consumers, but rather the improvement in collection efficiency of the VAT system. VAT collections in 2004 were around P140 billion, representing P1.4 trillion of sales. Leakage is estimated to be as high as P100 billion. Combined, the power and petroleum sectors account for around P600 million of output, more than 40 percent of the current reported VAT base. That's a huge amount of activity to bring out of the hard-to-tax business sector into a larger, and presumably more tax-compliant, sector of the economy.

Admittedly, a large part of the burden from taxing power and petroleum will fall on consumers. One consequence is that consumers may mitigate the effect of the price increase by educing consumption (again raising the issue of how credible the DOF revenue estimates ions are if they assume that tax increases will have no effect on prices and patterns of consumption). Another is that legislators may re-evaluate why the cost of power is so high, as a large part of the debates on power focused on whether power should remain VAT exempt to give consumers a break. As a tax purist, my own view is that power should be taxed (as well as agricultural products, health, education and other goods and services) so that the efficiencies from an effective VAT system can be achieved. If the price of power is too high, the appropriate policy response is to look at direct subsidies or whether things such as stranded costs are being dealt with. VAT exemption is not the correct response to high-priced power.

Correct policy call

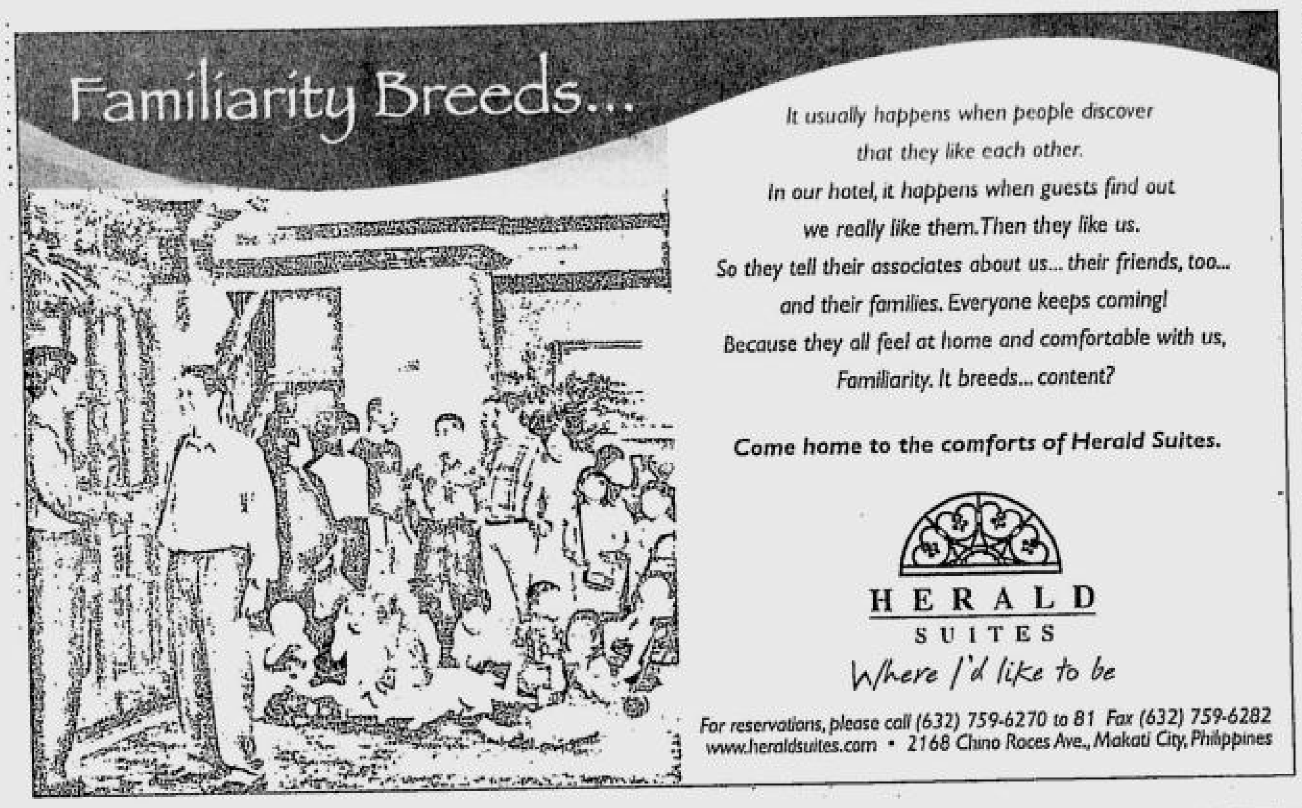
Congress should be congratulated for making the correct policy call when it taxed power in full and at a flat rate.

Input tax for aircraft is a sensible move, until Congress gave away the house. The 5-percent final withholding tax is not the only issue when the lack of transparency will leave taxpayers scratching their heads at what Congress intended. In a positive note, the VAT bill removes the restriction on claiming input tax credits for yachts, aircraft and automobiles used in business. The restriction made no policy sense anyway. If yachts, aircraft or automobiles were acquired for private use, the buyer has no entitlement to input tax. But if acquired for business—yacht chartering or automobile distribution—why shouldn't an input tax credit be allowed.

The quirk is that the rule was probably amended because VAT was slapped on domestic air travel, and it would be inequitable to make airlines pay VAT when they import planes, only to deny an input tax credit because of a few small words in Section 110. The irony is that at the 11th hour, Congress added all kinds of concessions for the air and shipping industry so most companies will never have to pay VAT on their inputs, either because domestic sales are subject to zero VAT or imports are VAT exempt. An airline will never pay VAT on the purchase of aircraft, so it is academic whether Section 110(A)(1)(5) allows an input tax credit for aircraft or not.

Again, there is no clear record about why the industry was treated so favorably. And technicians are left shaking their heads at an amendment that would have made sense, bar the political maneuvering that was required to pass the tax measure.

(The author is a tax expert and a director of PricewaterhouseCoopers)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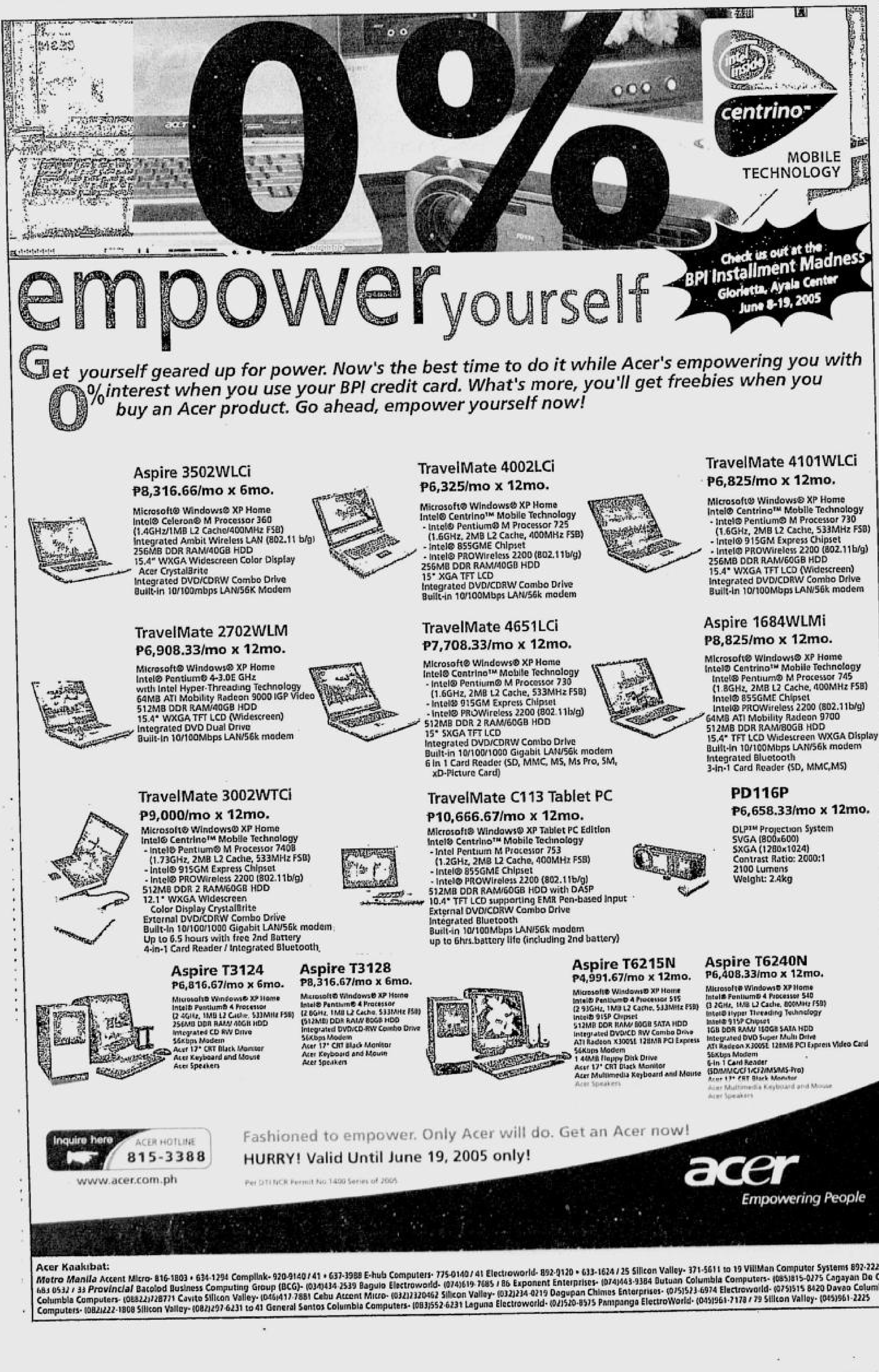
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APEXMINES
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NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of the Company will be held on June 29, 2005 at 9:00 in the morning at Valle Verde Country Club, Capt. Javier St., Bo. Ugong, Pasig City to consider and take action upon the following matters:

1. Call to order;.
2. Proof of Notice and Quorum;
3. Approval of the Minutes of the Stockholders Meeting held on June 30, 2004 .
4. Report of the President;
5. Presentation and approval of the Financial Statements as of December 31, 2004 embodied in the 2004 Annual Report;
6. Ratification of the acts of directors, committees and officers of the corporation;
7. Appointment of external auditors;
8. Election of directors;
9. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting;
10. Adjournment.

Only stockholders of record as of the close of business on May 31, 2005 will be entitled to attend and vote. Should you be unable to attend the meeting in person, you may appoint a PROXY by sending a proxy letter to Apex Mining Co., Inc. on or before June 28, 2005. Proxies received after that date shall not be recorded for this meeting

A copy of SEC Form 17-A (Annual Report) of the Company will be provided free of charge upon written request addressed to:

ATTY. CLARENCE D. GUERRERO
Assistant Corporate Secretary
Apex Mining Co., Inc.
6th Floor Manilabank Bldg.,
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Makati City, May 2005.

By Order of the Board of Directors

LEONARDO S. GAYAO
Corporate Secretary

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The LGU-Kalilangan, Bukidnon, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of project	: Municipal Building Construction – Phase III
Location	: LGU-Kalilangan, Bukidnon
Brief description	Purchase of construction materials
Approved budget for the contract	Php 3,278,525.72
Contract duration	
Delivery period	Immediate delivery (max. of 15 working days)

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR)

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follow:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 9, 2005
2 Pre-bid Conference	June 10, 2005
4. Opening of Bids	June 23, 2005 at 9.30 am
5 Bid Evaluation	June 23, 2005
6. Post-qualification	On or before June 30, 2005
7. Notice of Award	On or before July 15, 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php2,000.00 to the Municipal Treasurer of LGU-Kalilangan, Bukidnon.

The LGU-Kalilangan, Bukidnon assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved:

(Sgd.) SATURNINO M. TORRES
BAC Chairman

(PDI-June 8 & 15, 2005)

Foreign direct investments in Q1 drop 73% from year ago

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOREIGN direct investments registered with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shrunk by about 73 percent to $94.12 million in the first quarter compared to the $343.81 million in direct equity flows a year ago.

On a monthly basis, however, the FDIs increased to about $80 million in March, an improvement from the measly $7.74 million posted in January and $6.4 million in February.

The sole sector that benefited from the foreign equity flows so far this year was financial intermediation. Some $62.46 million was channeled to equity investments in non-bank financial intermediation, $5.9 million in non-bank financial intermediation and $4.1 million in insurance and pension funding.

BSP data also showed the following sectors generated fresh foreign equity: wholesale and retail trade, $16.28 million); manufacturing, $3.2 million; construction, $1 million, and real estate, renting and business services $1 million.

Net foreign portfolio or "hot money" inflows to the country hit about $1.8 billion from January to May 20, more than 12 times the amount posted in the same period last year.

The BSP said this was due to the strong first quarter corporate earnings of select firms and profit prospects of many industries, the strengthening of the peso and the attractive initial public offerings of a number of companies such as Manila Water Co., Semirara Mining Corp. and SM Investment Corp.

The BSP expects FDI inflows to the country to improve later this year as investor sentiment had turned more bullish since the start of the year. In particular, more investments are expected from the privatization of the National Power Corp.'s assets as well as fresh equity in the mining sector following the Supreme Court ruling.

In 2004, FDIs registered with the BSP slumped by 54.3 percent to $680.27 million from the previous year amid the uncertain business environment. It was the first time since 2001 that FDI to the country had fallen below the $1-billion mark.

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Circular No. 485
Series of 2005

Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 640 dated 12 May 2005, the Manual of Regulations for Banks (MORB) is hereby amended, as follows:

Section 1. Section X263 of the MORB is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section X263 **Service and Maintenance Fees.** Banks may impose AND COLLECT service CHARGES AND/or maintenance fees on savings and demand deposit accounts, WHETHER ACTIVE OR dormant, THAT FALL BELOW THE REQUIRED MINIMUM MONTHLY AVERAGE DAILY BALANCE (ADB), SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

a) THE IMPOSITION OF SUCH CHARGES OR FEES IS CLEARLY STATED AMONG THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE DEPOSIT;

b) The rate or amount of such charges or fees is properly disclosed among the terms and conditions of the deposit;

c) THE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT BALANCES HAVE FALLEN BELOW THE REQUIRED MINIMUM MONTHLY ADB FOR DORMANT ACCOUNTS AND FOR AT LEAST TWO (2) CONSECUTIVE MONTHS FOR ACTIVE ACCOUNTS;

d) The REQUIRED minimum MONTHLY ADB of deposits are properly disclosed among the terms and conditions of the deposit;

e) IN THE CASE OF CHARGES AND FEES FOR DORMANT ACCOUNTS OR DORMANCY FEE, the period of dormancy as prescribed under Subsec. X163.12 shall be properly disclosed among the terms and conditions of the deposit, AND THAT THE DEPOSITORS SHALL BE INFORMED BY REGISTERED MAIL WITH RETURN CARD ON HIS LAST KNOWN ADDRESS AT LEAST SIXTY (60) DAYS PRIOR TO THE IMPOSITION OF DORMANCY FEE."

Section 2. Subsection X263.1 of the MORB is hereby added to read as follows:

"SUBSEC. X263.1 **Amendments to terms and conditions for the imposition of service charges/fees.** ANY CHANGE IN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPOSITION OF SERVICE CHARGES AND/OR MAINTENANCE FEES, E.G., INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF SUCH CHARGES AND FEES OR INCREASE IN THE REQUIRED MINIMUM MONTHLY ADB OF DEPOSITS, SHALL TAKE EFFECT ONLY AFTER DUE NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITOR: *PROVIDED,* THAT INFORMATION BY REGULAR MAIL, STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT MESSAGES, ELECTRONIC MAIL, COURIER DELIVERY AND/OR OTHER ALTERNATIVE MODES OF COMMUNICATION ON THE DEPOSITOR'S LAST KNOWN ADDRESS AT LEAST SIXTY (60) DAYS PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION SHALL BE CONSIDERED SUFFICIENT NOTICE: *PROVIDED, FURTHER,* THAT FAILURE OF THE DEPOSITOR TO MANIFEST OR REGISTER HIS OBJECTION TO THE NEW SERVICE CHARGES AND MAINTENANCE FEES OR ANY CHANGE IN THEIR TERMS AND CONDITIONS IN WRITING WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS FROM RECEIPT OF WRITTEN NOTICE OF AMENDMENT SHALL BE DEEMED TO CONSTITUTE ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH CHANGES, FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SUBSECTION

BANKS SHALL LIKEWISE POST SAID INFORMATION ON THEIR RESPECTIVE WEBSITES, AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE (ATM) ON-SCREEN MESSAGES, AND IN CONSPICUOUS PLACES WITHIN THE BANK PREMISES AND OTHER PLACES NEAR THE BANK'S OWN ATM AT LEAST SIXTY (60) DAYS PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION."

This Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication either in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

FOR THE MONETARY BOARD:

(*Sgd.*) **AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.**
Officer-In-Charge

26 May 2005

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RP, Japan to sign free trade deal this year

By Clarissa S. Batino

NAGOYA, Japan—The Philippines and Japan are expected to sign before the end of the year a bilateral free trade agreement that would specifically open up Japan's health sector to Filipino nurses and caregivers, according to Philippine Ambassador to Japan Domingo Siazon.

The Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement is expected to increase Japanese investments in the Philippines, particularly in automotive and mining sectors, Siazon said.

The remaining issue being discussed in the ongoing negotiations for the free trade deal was the number of Filipino health workers that would be allowed entry into Japan.

Siazon said Filipinos were currently not allowed to go into health care.

But whatever number of Filipino nurses and caregivers that will be allowed to work here will not offset the number of entertainers who lost their jobs here because of the tightening of Japan's requirements, Siazon said.

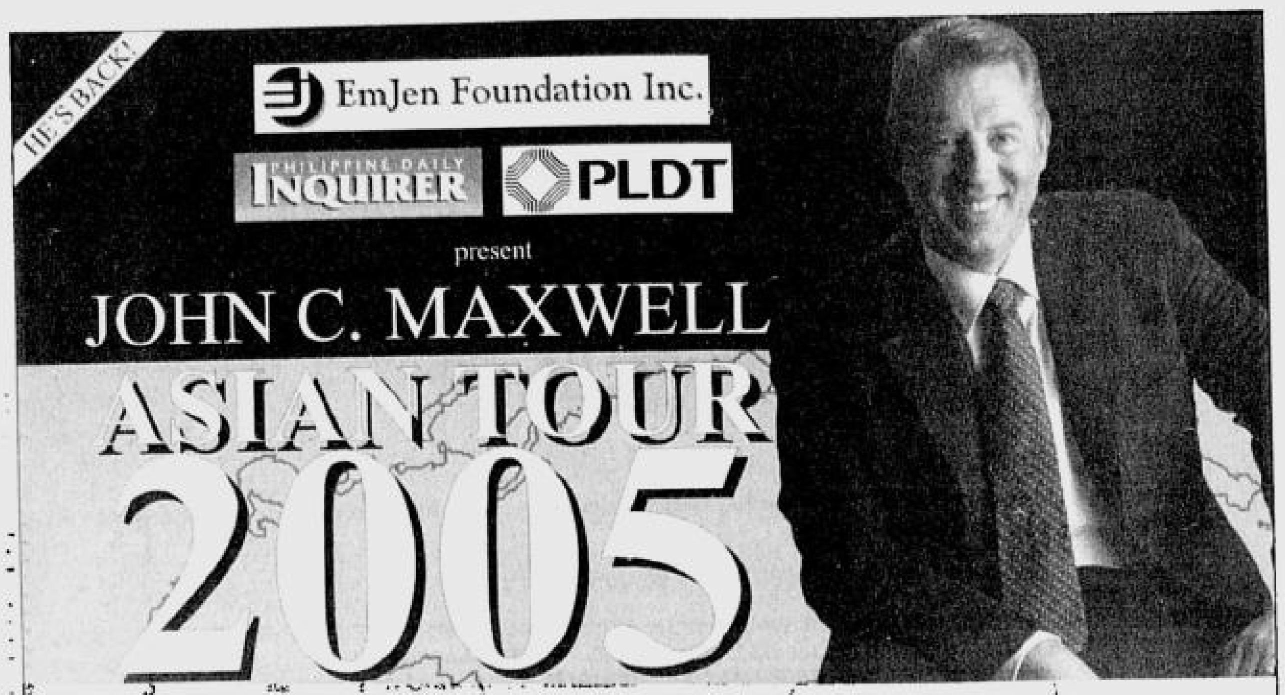
Japan, the Philippines' second largest trading partner, wanted to limit to 100 the Filipino health workers who would be allowed to work here, he said.

But the Philippines, however, wanted the number to be "demand based" or as many as what the market can accommodate.

So far, Japan and the Philippines have agreed to lift restrictions on agriculture, reduce the tariffs on automobiles and electronic spare parts, and provide technical assistance in various areas.

Siazon said Japan was also given more leeway to participate in economic zone investments in the Philippines.

The free trade agreement between the two counties would be the third for Japan, after those with Singapore and Mexico. Thailand and Malaysia are holding similar bilateral talks with Japan.



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Corporate executives, young professionals; business leaders, students, government employees, non-government organizations.

What is this seminar about?
You will discover that success is found on the well-traveled journey, not at a destination.

Defining success is a difficult task. Most people equate it with wealth, power and happiness. However, true success is something you do not acquire or achieve. Rather, it is a journey you take your whole life long.

In a refreshingly straight-forward style, Dr. John Maxwell shares unique insights into what it means to be successful.

DEVELOPING THE LEADERS AROUND YOU
Saturday, July 23, 2005, 8:00 AM to 12:00 NN, ALIW Theater, CCP Complex

Who should attend this seminar?
CEOs, Senior Management, business owners and entrepreneurs, government officials and leaders.

What is this seminar about?
Supremely practical, this seminar is about strategies that help you effectively transform your dreams into reality by building up your people. Emphasizing that your organization can't grow unless its members grow, Dr. John Maxwell encourages you to identify and train potential leaders. You'll learn how to foster productive team spirit, make difficult decisions, what to look for in promising leaders, ways to nurture, encourage and equip people, how to handle confrontation and much more.

WINNING WITH PEOPLE
Saturday, July 23, 2005, 1:30 PM to 5:30 PM, ALIW Theater, CCP Complex

Who should attend this seminar?
CEOs, Senior Management, business owners and entrepreneurs, government officials and leaders.

What is this seminar about?
Successful CEOs, entrepreneurs, top salespeople all agree: the characteristic most needed for success in leadership positions is the ability to work with people.

Some people are born with great relationship skills, but those who are not can learn to improve them. In Winning With People, John Maxwell has translated decades of experience into People Principles that anyone can learn.

Some principles are intuitive, such as the Lens Principle: Who We Are Determines How We See Others. Others principles may go against your instincts, such as The Confrontation Principle: Caring For People Should Precede Confronting People. All of them are 100% practical!

For inquiries and ticket reservations, please visit johnmaxwell.emjen.org or call 885-7049 (free delivery). Tickets are also available at all SM-Ticketnet outlets located at the SM Department Store Customer Service area and at the Araneta Coliseum ticket booths. For inquiries and reservations, please call 911-5555.

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- Cannibalization
  "Top management wants to launch a cheaper, price brand that I think will compete and cannibalize our premium brand. What should I do?"
- Careers and opportunities in marketing
- Marketing Planning & Implementation
- Marketing to the masa, middle class & rich
- New Product Ideas
- Pricing
  "We're about to increase our prices of our consumer products. What is the correct way to adjust the prices and know in advance what will be acceptable to the market without suffering a decrease in sale?"
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DR NED ROBERTO PhD is one of Asia's leading authorities on marketing. He is a much sought after consultant, speaker, author and educator. He has taught at De La Salle University in Manila, Northwestern University in Chicago and INSEAD in France. He was professor of International Marketing at the Asian Institute of Management for 29 years. In 1983, he received the Philippine Marketing Association's Agora Award for Marketing Education, and in 2004, he was awarded the 1st Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Marketing Educators.

Dr. Roberto has consulted and conducted in-house seminars for Fortune 500 companies in the U.S., Europe, and Asia such as Procter & Gamble, Citibank, McCann-Erickson, Nestle, AC Nielsen, etc. He is the author (with Philip Kotler) of Social Marketing, which has been translated into seven languages, as well as the best-selling User-Friendly Marketing Research and several other books and countless papers on marketing.

Dr. Roberto earned his MBA and PhD in Marketing at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business

PDI-06-08-05

BCDA, CJHDevco urged to settle dispute amicably

By Ronnel W. Domingo

GROUPS caught in the middle of a "media war" yesterday called on the owner and the developer of the Camp John Hay economic zone to settle their dispute over unpaid rent and voided tax perks.

In a statement, Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan said the Bases Conversion and Development Authority and CJH Development Corp. should sit down and settle their differences amicably as sub-lessees and concessionaires feared the adverse effects of the dispute.

BCDA, through the John Hay Management Corp., earlier threatened to takeover the facility considering CJHDevco's apparent inability to pay P2.3 billion in unpaid rent that accumulated since 1997.

For its part, the developer accused BCDA of breach of contract for not supporting the firm and the ecozone's sub-locators when the Supreme Court voided tax incentives for them.

Domogan said that in a meeting last June 3, sub-locators and small businessmen operating in Camp John Hay called on the opposing sides to find a common ground and spare "innocent third parties caught in the crossfire."

The solon quoted small vendor Aurora Dangpa as saying that the ongoing media tussle had placed people like her at risk.

Domogan, who was mayor of Baguio when the lease agreement between BCDA and CJHDevco was signed in 1996, added that the two parties should solve the issues as soon as possible so that projects of the city government and the local tourism industry could be implemented.

Part of the rent from Camp John Hay is earmarked for the local government.

Last week, BCDA said it intended to offer economic zone incentives to groups of investors who might replace CJHDevco as operator of the tourism facility in Baguio City.

Lyssa Pagano-Calde of JHMC said the perks could include tax holidays of four to six years.

Calde added that BCDA was "also seriously studying the possible application of ecozone incentives to the current locators in [John Hay]."

She said such a move would not require a new law and was subject only to the approval of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority and the BCDA board.

For its part, CJHDevco cried harassment, saying that the BCDA had been telling John Hay locators that rent should be paid directly to the government.

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SCHEDULE-I

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1.	One (1) lot of junk substation equipment and transmission line materials consisting of guy wires, aluminum OHGW, post and suspension insulators, current transformers, GI sheets, steel tower parts, junk Willy's Jeep and other junk items located at Kalayaan Warehouse, Kalayaan, Laguna	P 700,000.00/lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:
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Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. Alfonso D. Alday, Manager, Warehousing Inventory, Traffic and Asset Disposal Division (WITADD) at Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 922-8431. **Deadline for issuance of bid form is 4:00 p.m. June 28, 2005.**

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI - June 8, 9 & 10, 2005)

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Maynila, Pilipinas
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Tel. No(s).: 524-8718

Pre-bid Conference Date and Time: 17 June 2005 at 10:00 A.M.
Bidding Date and Time: 29 June 2005, not later than 10:00 A.M.
Place: Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-storey Building, BSP Main Complex, Malate, Manila

Interested bidders shall submit not later than the bidding date and time the following documents in three (3) separate envelopes:

Envelope No. 1:
1. Articles of Incorporation/Partnership and/or Business Registration Papers (for single proprietorship) and Company Profile.
2. Y2004 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet)
3. Y2004 Income Tax Return duly stamped/received by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) or its Authorized Agent Bank and Tax Clearance Certificate issued by the BIR.
4. Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License.
5. Prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid; or a certification from the bank stating that the bidder has a cash deposit with a holding period of at least one (1) month from date of bidding. The commitment or deposit certificate shall be in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = [(Current Assets – Current Liabilities)(K)] minus value of all outstanding projects: K = 10.
6. Sworn statement that the prospective bidder is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, or Corporation
7. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check.
8. Sworn certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original.
9. Affidavit of the prospective bidder that he or she or any officer of the corporation is not related to the head of the procuring entity by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.
10. Product brochure showing compliance with specifications.

Envelope No. 2:
1. Instructions to Bidders
2. Duly accomplished Certification/Undertaking
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Envelope No. 3:
Price Proposal

All envelopes shall be dropped in the bid box located at MR2A, 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex. **LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

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(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI–June 8, 2005)

Employer reneges on salary offer

By Tita Datu Puangco

MY FORMER boss 'pirated' me to work as his research assistant in an agricultural research firm. In my discussion with him and the research manager, they committed a certain amount as my entry rate. Though, the salary is really a little bit lower than what I received from my former employer, I accepted the offer because of the chance of possible employment for my wife. Besides, the rate was only my entry rate. This was written in the footnote of my job description document.

However, when I received my first salary, I was surprised to find that I was given only almost half of what was agreed upon. I informed my boss and the research manager. I was not bothered at first thinking that the human resource and accounting may have committed a mistake.

Three payroll periods have passed and I still received the same amount. I referred the problem to my immediate boss, the research manager, accounting and the human resource office. They promised that the issue will be resolved before a certain date.

Another payroll passed again and my problem was not yet resolved. I then personally discussed this issue with all the offices concerned.

According to the HR department, I was paid based mainly for the position that was given to me. And they do not know what has been discussed and what transpired between me and the research department.

I informed my boss and research manager of this and they said that they have already submitted a recommendation for the salary as they had committed to me.

I wrote two letters to all the offices concerned regarding my plight. I followed up after every payroll. I let them know that I am claiming what is just and fair for me and that I will never claim more than what is due to me.

I have been working seven months with this company and my issue has remained unsolved. I am really upset with my boss and the research manager. I am also upset with the HR department for taking a long time solving the issue. I have doubled my efforts to let them know that I am more than qualified to receive the amount. I am affected emotionally and psychologically because of this battle.

I would like to take some legal actions. Do I have any edge in filing legal complaints against my boss or this company? Please advise. Thank you

Betrayed employee

Advice

For the Anxious Person at Work

I can sense the frustration in your letter. I have consulted with people who are knowledgeable on labor relations and the Labor Code. According to them, verbal agreements such as the one committed to you on the starting salary is binding and the footnote in your job description is proof of the agreement.

As you mentioned, you filed a formal written inquiry concerning the discrepancy between the salary you were promised and what you actually receive. It may also be helpful if you get a written copy of the salary recommendation.

Since this issue is affecting you emotionally and psychologically, it may be best for you to file a case with the National Labor Relations Commission for nonpayment of wages and settle this issue once and for all.

Using as reference "Everyone's Labor Code by Azucena," Chapter 3 Payment of Wages Article 102 notes, "Where the employee alleges nonpayment of wages and or commission, the employer has the burden to prove payment (Jimenez, et al. vs NLRC and Juanatas, GR No. 11690, April 2,1996.)." It also states on page 82, "...if doubts exist between the evidence presented by the employer and the employee, the scales of justice must be tilted in favor of the latter."

All the best! May you be able to settle your situation at the earliest time. Thank you.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

How can you spot and deal with insubordination?

Working Wounded

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I have an employee who never listens to what he's told to do. I'm tired of it and feel that this is blatant insubordination, but our company personnel policies don't specifically define what constitutes insubordination. Can you offer one?

Beleaguered

Your e-mail reminded me of Lawrence Omansky. This New York businessman was charged with kidnapping his business partner after the partner had criticized him during a meeting. Omansky actually tied up his partner and forced him into a crawl space where he stayed for 28 hours until he managed to escape. Omansky's attorney dismissed the charge of kidnapping saying that it was "a simple business dispute."

Omansky's actions are a classic case of an overreaction to a problem at work. To help you be sure that you don't overreact, I've listed below what constitutes insubordination, and what doesn't. For more information about insubordination, talk to your human resources department, company lawyer or check out "Dealing with Problem Employees" by Delpro and Guerin (Nolo, 2003).

Is it a refusal to follow a direct order? The keyword is refusal. There are many times when work doesn't get done that can be chalked up to procrastination, an employee not understanding your request, or an employee swamped with other assignments. I'm not saying that employees who are not getting the job done can't be punished; they can. It's just that procrastination, confusion or overwork doesn't normally rise to the level of insubordination.

Is the employee's refusal based on legitimate safety concerns? Employees are legally protected when they refuse to do something that they believe is a safety hazard. Delpro and Guerin suggest that safety concerns need to be investigated and that you should inform the employee of the results of your investigation. Not only are your employees protected from refusing to do something unsafe, your organization is prohibited from retaliating against the employee for raising these concerns.

Is it based on concerns about illegality? Employees can also refuse to act when they believe that what the company is asking them to do is against the law or violates a workplace regulation. For example, if the company asks an employee to work overtime without appropriate compensation, the employee can refuse to work under these conditions. Many states have laws that protect employee from retaliation by their company for refusing to do something they think is illegal.

Are the employee's actions unjustifiable? If the employee refused a direct order to act and they don't assert any health, safety or legality issues then insubordination can be considered. Insubordination is a big enough deal that most organizations allow the normal progressive disciplinary process (verbal warning, written warning, suspension, termination) to be accelerated. Before you start considering punishment, check back in with HR.

Don't let your troublesome employee turn you into a hostage. Find out why they are not getting the job done and look at all your options including discipline. But before you get all tied, be sure the punishment fits the crime.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: Have you ever been accused of insubordination?

—I came close, 16.7 percent

—Yes, 25.8 percent

—No, 57.3 percent

(Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

Blind students see and learn ...

From page B8

with a grin. A family member brought Rescober to Manila where he learned braille, therapeutic massage, and the use of the computer. "Computer Eyes is one of the reasons why I became independent, particularly in my studies; I used to have someone read to me, but with JAWS I can do things on my own-it really helped me a lot," he reveals.

Now, Rescober is a different and better man. Aside from his academic achievements, he also excels in shot put and javelin throwing, and was even sent abroad to represent the Philippines in a tournament. He is also good at chess. For Rescober, his disability ushered in good things: "When I was able to accept what happened to me, I became thankful that I became blind because I saw God's great plan for my life." He says that he enjoys more privileges now, like scholarships for blind students for example. "Maybe if I didn't go blind, I would have remained a farmer in the province," he says.

Determination to study

Diana Rose Rivera was in her third year college studying Marketing in San Sebastian College when she became totally blind. Her blindness was a complication of a kidney disease. As a young student with so much to look forward to, Rivera became devastated when she had to stop schooling due to her inability to participate in class.

She joined the Computer Eyes summer training camp in 2002, and was able to return to school after a hard fight for re-acceptance. "They thought that I wouldn't be able to meet their requirements," Rivera says, "but because of Computer Eyes, I learned to use many applications and I improved my computer skills, so when I was able to go back to San Sebastian, I proved to them that I could do the work," she says with a smile. Rivera also worked briefly as a human resources trainee for IBM. She got her degree in Marketing in 2004, and now plans to put up her own Internet cafe business in August this year.

"When I was refused at San Sebastian, I was really hurt," she confides, "But now, after what I went through, I realized that I only lost my sense of sight, there are four other senses that I still have left."

(Send feedback to blubitel@yahoo.com.)

Marketing manager makes ...

From page B8

road to get to where he wants to be," she adds.

Of course, she does not totally dismiss the advantage of technical know-how. "It is not necessary but it would help to know about technology. So if you are planning to be on this job, it would help if you read related information about it, get training, attend seminars and engage with related associations."

Twice named as Oracle's Mythical Five Model Employee of the Year, a Performance Awardee and recipient of a Corporate Marketing Innovation Award together with manager Susan Jaramillo, Baltan is no doubt exactly where she wants to be. Aside from the challenges, the opportunity to travel, some of the best benefits in the industry and the chance to be a stockholder, she enjoys the intangible benefits she takes home. "I work for the world's leader in business technology! I've been with Oracle for almost 11 years now. The culture here is different. The people are warm. This is my second home already. This is where I've learned most of the things. I've met a lot of friends here. I've met a lot of people who changed my life."

(E-mail feedback to candyvillanueva@pldtdsl.net.)

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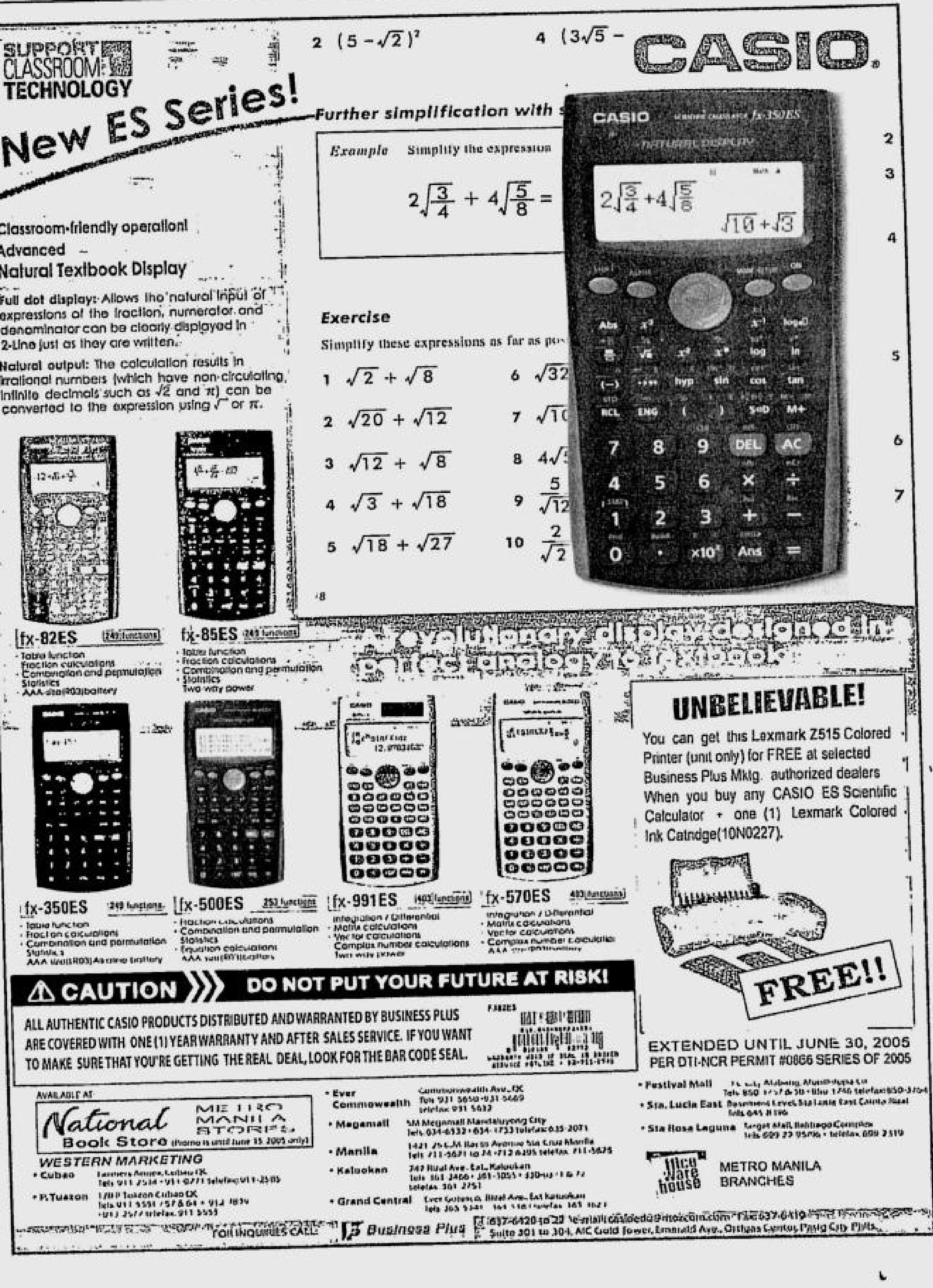

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Example Simplify the expression

$2\sqrt{\frac{3}{4}} + 4\sqrt{\frac{5}{8}} =$

Exercise

Simplify these expressions as far as po

1 $\sqrt{2} + \sqrt{8}$
2 $\sqrt{20} + \sqrt{12}$
3 $\sqrt{12} + \sqrt{8}$
4 $\sqrt{3} + \sqrt{18}$
5 $\sqrt{18} + \sqrt{27}$

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How to work in 'multi-generation' workplace

By Loree Cruz-Mante
Contributor

CHANGING workplace realities are increasingly altering the character of workforces that make up organizations. While it is possible to describe some workforces as generally young (like in IT companies) or old (like in consulting companies which require more mature staff), there are workplaces where generations are represented quite evenly (such as call centers). Intergenerational workforces require a different set of skills for dealing with the challenge of recruiting, maintaining, and developing people with divergent needs.

Much has been written about the so-called generation gap, particularly as it poses unique challenges to families and relationships in general. Workplace issues with generational distinctions, however, have yet to be fully understood and managed.

Different generations, needs

One often hears an older person say: "My dear young one, you are still on your way up, but I am already on my way back." This statement, loaded with wisdom, a sense of pride in experience, and an unsaid admonition to shut up and listen, is often used to demand respect from younger people, especially teenagers and children.

The situation is not any different in the workplace. Older people demand respect for having worked all these years, even as younger workers were not even born yet. They expect to be listened to when they tell stories of how the office grew from two people to a company of 1,000 employees. They expect to have their advice taken seriously, especially those that contain lessons of patience, understanding and long-suffering. They need to feel worthy and useful, if only for their vast experience at work. Their wrinkles and white hair are their badges of courage. They may not be too keen on learning new things because they have succeeded even with their supposedly outmoded systems. They have a deep hunger to be accepted for what they have made of themselves.

On the other hand, the younger ones—new graduates, young professionals—come to the workplace equipped with modern-day survival skills. Reared in a fast-paced world, they are used to quick searches, instant results, multitasking, and divided screens. They are savvy with technology and technology-driven urges. Like Machiavelli, they do not tolerate the slow and the weak. Many of them equate performance with technological know-how, and often think that technology can substitute for substance.

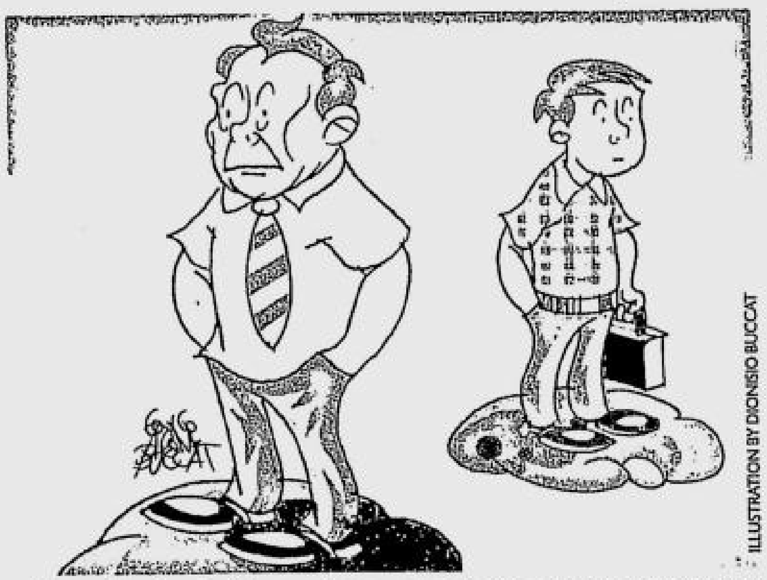

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Midlife workers straddle both generational extremes, and they know enough of work and ambition to accept that working is still very much a part of their immediate future. They can choose to learn new things or remain with what they already know. Tempered by years of working, they often know what it takes to get to where they want to go, if they are not already there. They may venture into learning new things if they remain competitive. But some may be disinterested if they look forward to retirement. They are also in a constant search for answers to midlife questions and uncertainties. Because they are neither too far nor near to the age of computers, they often survive the onslaught of technology with some effort.

Technology is the stage

Technology is often the stage where much of the intergenerational drama happens. Take, for example, the computer. Older workers do not ordinarily possess the aptitude for operating a computer. The reason is simple: they did not grow up with one. They played with thread spools and discarded tin cans, not Counter-strike or NBA Live. They listened to transistor radios, typed on manual typewriters, operated telexes, and knew stenography. Their version of goofing off at work included hiding comics in their drawers and writing love letters while typing board meeting reports. They knew the joys of *patintero*, *tumbang preso*, and *sungka*. They added without calculators. Many believe that they can get by with methods and processes from way back when.

Younger workers, on the other hand, grew up in a different world where electronic toys, cell phones, and junk food are staple fare. They completed homework alongside DVD movies. They surfed instead of leafing through library card catalogues. They blogged instead of mailing letters. They cannot imagine a world without technology simply because that is the only one they know.

And so it is that younger workers cannot understand why it takes so long for older workers to open e-mail or even the computer, or why they lose documents because they don't know how to save. To younger workers, the older workers are hopelessly slow. On the other hand, the older workers think the younger workers are hopelessly impatient.

Younger and older workers play unique roles in achieving shared objectives at work. Techie younger workers may best contribute by helping older workers to present their thoughts using high-tech modalities. Older workers can share valuable insights as they mentor young wards and help shape them for future roles.

Appreciation

Passing judgment is counterproductive and serves little purpose except to widen the generation gap. Instead of ridiculing the old president for not knowing how to print a document, it might be better to appreciate that he or she is running the company that now feeds the younger workers' families. Instead of ridiculing the young programmer for insisting on the latest hardware, it might be better to appreciate that his or her mindset is needed to make the company compete in a technology-driven marketplace.

(To be continued next week.)

(Loree Cruz-Mante is a human resources and organization development practitioner, resident writer of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture, and senior consultant with leading transitions management firm Drake Beam Morin. E-mail your comments to lcmante@yahoo.com.)

Blind students see and learn with 'Computer Eyes'

By Ime Morales Aznar
Contributor

PEOPLE take so many things for granted. Simple daily activities like using the computer keyboard or the mouse, for example, are not given much importance. "When ordinary people use the computer, they can easily type away, click the mouse, and not think much about it; but when you are blind, you have to work extra hard to be able to use the computer," says Diane Rose Rivera, one of the trainers in the recently concluded Computer Eyes: Fifth National Computer Camp for Blind Students. The two-week training course was held at the offices of IBM Philippines in Libis, Quezon City.

A COMPUTER Eyes participant learns how to use the computer.
AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Thirty participants with ages ranging from 7 to 25 years old came from different places like Bicol, Davao, Baguio, Isabela, Cebu, Bacolod, Pangasinan and Manila, to participate in this year's summer training camp. Since its inception in 2001, Computer Eyes has helped more than 100 students avail of free computer training. It is a project of Resources for the Blind Inc., in partnership with IBM Philippines, Department of Education, Overbrook Nippon Network on Educational Technology, and Freedom Scientific.

Technology for everyone

The mission of Computer Eyes is "to provide blind and visually impaired individuals with necessary skills to function independently in today's fast-paced technological environment." To do this, the camp's trainors teach blind students how to use an adaptive software that will allow them to operate the computer despite their handicap. The software is called JAWS for Windows, a screen reader developed by Freedom Scientific. JAWS reads information on the screen using synthesized speech. With this software, a user can manipulate programs or applications, edit documents, and read web pages.

By the end of the training camp, students would have learned the use of adaptive technology to create documents, send and receive e-mail messages, and access the Internet. The organizers believe that with the right computer skills, students can eventually land gainful employment, and become professionals in their chosen fields.

Inspiring stories

Computer Eyes, which has launched five summer courses to date, has already produced young achievers whose stories inspire not only other blind persons, but many "sighted" people as well.

Joyce Lopez is a second year BS Theology student at Wesleyan Bible College. She joined the first training camp in 2001 and the summer camp the following year. She returns this year as a trainer who has gained the much-needed self-confidence, and believes that "the blind can do the things that sighted people can do."

Lopez is the type of person who always has a smile on her face, and a cheerful glow about her. Being blind, it is not that easy to achieve this aura if a person has not come to terms with his or her handicap. But Lopez obviously has. "I accepted it already," she says with a smile. Although Lopez was not born blind, she became blind when hospital nurses failed to cover her eyes when she was put in the incubator. Lopez was born prematurely.

"After the camp, I became independent and I learned to do research on my own," Lopez says, "but the camp helped the people around me, too, since I require less assistance now."

Becoming a professional

Hannah Mae Aldeza was also born prematurely. Her mother had myoma and was forced to give birth to Hannah shortly before her seventh month of pregnancy. "They say it was oxygen overdose that made me blind," Aldeza explains, "because if they didn't do that, I would have died then." Today, Aldeza is a second year Computer Science student at STI College in Cubao. Like Lopez, she also joined the summer camps in 2001 and 2002.

"I've been so interested in computers since I was young, and with the help of the camp, I am now able to use computers on my own—for my homework, for Internet surfing," Aldeza reveals. "Because of the camp, I got inspired to continue my college education and even took a computer course," she continues. She says that she is now studying to fulfill her dream of finishing college and getting a stable job. "I don't want to beg, or become a masseuse—not that I look down on this job—but I also want to become a professional like everybody else," Aldeza reasons.

Aldeza also returns to the 2005 summer camp to train other blind students. "I believe that a blind person can teach another blind student better," she says with a smile, "it makes me happy when they understand what I teach."

Seeing God's plan

For Joel Rescober, a third year BS Computer Management student at Trinity College, blindness is a blessing in disguise. As a young farmer growing up in the province, Rescober developed an abnormality in his retina that caused his vision to slowly deteriorate. In 1998, at 14, he completely lost his sight after a bout with German measles. At that point, he began to feel depressed, "What is the sense of my life now?" he used to ask. He told his friends they were lucky they could continue schooling, while he would probably just stay home all the time.

"I used to fall into manholes, and hailed trucks which I thought were jeeps," he says

BLIND/B7

Marketing manager makes information her business

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

ALL ABOUT WORK

POWER no longer lies solely in the hands of those who possess super weapons. In this day and age of information, power lies in the hands of those who have the right information and know how to manipulate it. For this reason, almost every thriving business relies on information technology (IT). Gerilyn Posadas-Baltan is well aware of this fact because information is her business as marketing manager of Oracle Philippines Corporation.

Oracle is one of the largest enterprise software companies in the world. For almost three decades now, Oracle has provided the software and services that organizations need too get the most up-to-date and accurate information for their business. From health care to travel, banking to education, for almost any kind of industry, Oracle provides different solutions so companies can share valuable high-quality, consistent data in real time. It is Baltan's mission to make the power of information available to the small and midsize businesses and large enterprises in the country.

One-woman team

"Oracle's business is information—how to manage it, use it, share it, protect it," says Baltan. According to her, learning how to make the most out of information is vital because everyday life runs on technology. Businesses run on technology. Even the people business of the human resource management (HRM) departments of some companies run on automated applications. Financial institutions rely on eBanking solutions. The health care industry is beginning to realize the benefits of systems that provide fast and reliable information. Baltan is proud to be a part of a company that makes all these possible "I am part of a company that provides world-class technology which helps companies make better infrastructure and processes."

With over a decade of experience in IT marketing and partnering execution, Baltan handles the marketing of all the products and services of Oracle in the country. A tough duty to manage especially in a multinational company, it is curious that Baltan is the only person in her team. "It is never an easy task but I always get support from ev eryone, from our managing director to sales, pre-sales, consulting, education, support, finance and even the HR team."

Baltan covers every area in marketing including marketing programs, events and campaigns from planning and budgeting. She also takes care of strategic planning with sales teams quarterly and yearly. As if that is not enough load on her back, the marketing manager also has duties in Oracle's offices in Asean (or Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. She assists Asean countries in marketing executions which often finds her flying in and out of these countries especially to Singapore. Beyond these countries she also communicates, coordinates and liaisons with offices from the Asia Pacific Region like Australia, Hong Kong and New Zealand.

Overwhelming tasks

Because of the different groups she has to coordinate with, not a day goes by without a meeting. She's either on a teleconference with one of the country managers in Singapore or having lunch with a supplier. The moment she adjourns a meeting she's off to a hotel ballroom to overlook a product launch or a seminar. Her pre event activities often include preparing content material, conceptualizing themes and strategizing gimmicks.

During the event, she is a coordinator, a socialite and a business person all in one. Sometimes speakers come from their Asean and Asia Pacific offices and she has to make sure they have everything they need while dealing with heavy accents and unusual requests. She also coordinates with the events manager to ensure that everything is in place in terms of venue, facilities and refreshments. "Sometimes you need to be up there on-stage to be a facilitator, sometimes the voice over person, the director, sometimes the waiter," the manager offers humbly. At the same time, she mingles with the attendees to increase her network and build relations with possible clients. After sending off the attendees happily more informed with freebies, tokens and the prospect of better work systems in hand, Baltan is only halfway through her work. Report preparation, metrics analysis and health checks need to be taken care of. She says that she needs to check on "what did we do best and what needs improvement, lead management—from logging the leads to the system to engaging who needs to follow-up, up to moving it up to opportunity. Doing lead maturation to close the opportunity and sometimes engaging myself to help Oracle "refresh" relationship with our install base."

BALTAN
RUDY ESPERAS

She says the most difficult part of her job is when a carefully thought of project or event doesn't work according to planned. From a low attended event to technical difficulties, anything can go wrong. Sometimes it's as simple as a lapel microphone that suddenly malfunctions in the middle of a presentation. According to Baltan, the hardest part is accepting failure and facing an accusation that says, "Your idea didn't work!"

Technical background

A solitary force with such a broad spectrum of responsibility, Baltan handles her work with the attitude of a fighter. "There are no easy jobs so I embrace each challenge with open arms." No amount of formal education could prepare one for such challenges. Although a degree holder in Computer Data Processing Management, Baltan claims that a technical background is not mandatory to handle marketing in the IT field. In fact, she advises those who wish to take the same path to consider courses in marketing or communication arts. "A good school helps but I believe that it always depends on the individual. A person needs to make his or her own

MARKETING/B7

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PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites prospective Partners to apply for eligibility and, if subsequently found eligible, to bid for the project:

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Prospective partners must meet these criteria:

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2. With a minimum authorized capital stock of Ten Million Philippine Pesos (PhP 10,000,000.00) and a minimum paid-up capital of Two Million Five Hundred Thousand Philippine Pesos (PhP 2,500,000.00);
3. With at least two (2) geologists having a minimum of five-year professional experience. The submission of curricula vitae and track records in mining operations and environmental management of the technical personnel who shall undertake the activities in the submitted Work Program shall be strictly required as a mandatory requirement; and
4. In case of a corporation, must declare and show proof that it is already a holder of an Exploration Permit (EP). Mineral Agreement (MA) or Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA).

   The compliance of a corporation to criterion # 4 shall automatically establish its eligibility to bid for the subject project.

The Eligibility Documents and the Bid Documents shall be available for issuance to interested parties starting May 30, 2005 from the PD-Contracts Administration Group / BAC Secretariat (c/o F.T. Tolibas (loc. 5179) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Philippine Peso Five Thousand (PhP 5,000.00)** or **US Dollar One Hundred Thirty (US$ 130.00)** in case of foreign bidders to defray courier expenses.

For purposes of clarifying certain issues, interested parties are invited to a clarificatory meeting to be held on **June 7, 2005 10:00 A.M.** at the BAC Conference Room, Bldg. V, PNOC-EDC, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines. Site Inspection will be held thereafter at the exploration site in Southern Negros, Philippines **(to be scheduled later)**

Interested parties shall submit their respective Letter of Intent and sealed Application for Eligibility in three (3) sets to the PD-Contracts Administration Group / BAC Secretariat, PNOC-Energy Development Corporation, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort-Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines not later than **5:00 P.M. on June 13, 2005**. The parties' Application for Eligibility will be evaluated and parties who are eligible to bid will be notified by PNOC-EDC.

Eligible parties shall then be required to submit their Financial Proposal in two separate sealed envelopes. All bids submitted by eligible parties must be accompanied by a bid security, callable on demand and valid for a period of **One Hundred Twenty (120)** calendar days reckoned from the date of bid opening, for an amount of at least **Philippine Peso One Million Three Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand (PhP 1,375,000.00)**, if in the form of cash, cashier's check / manager's check, or certified check; **Philippine Peso Two Million Sixty-Two Thousand Five Hundred (PhP 2,062,500.00)**, if in the form of bank guarantee; or **Philippine Peso Three Million Four Hundred Thirty-Seven Thousand Five Hundred (PhP 3,437,500.00)**, if in the form of a surety bond. The bids must be delivered to

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c/o PD-Contracts Administration Group / BAC Secretariat
PNOC-Energy Development Corporation
Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio
Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines

At or before 2:00 P.M. on July 5, 2005. Bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidders' representative who chose to attend.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders on the ground of PNOC-EDC's action.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--June 8, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABELLA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital invites interested bidders/suppliers to bid for the supply and delivery of the following:

		ABC	Pre-bid Conference (2:00 p.m.)	Bid Opening (2:00 p.m.)
1. Security Services		2,000,000.00	June 15, 2005	June 27, 2005
2. Foodstuff		4,006,429.00	June 16, 2005	June 28, 2005
3. Radiology/Ultrasound/ Internist Supplies		139,905.00	June 17, 2005	June 29, 2005
Medical Gases		5,008,708.00	-do-	-do-
4. Equipment:			June 20, 2005	July 1, 2005
Airconditioner, 3 tons including installation	4 units	408,000.00		
Blood Bank Refrigerator	1 unit	760,000.00		
Upright Freezer	1 unit	50,000.00		
Syringe Pump	5 units	390,000.00		
E-Cart	1 unit	200,000.00		
General Centrifuge	1 unit	100,000.00		
Serofuge	1 unit	100,000.00		
5. Various Instruments		2,087,682.00	June 22, 2005	July 4, 2005
6. RE-BID - Drugs and Medicines			June 23, 2005	July 6, 2005
Dermatological/Disinfectant Supplies			June 17, 2005	June 29, 2005

Bid documents may be secured at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office, starting June 1 to June 14, 2005 upon payment of required non-refundable fee. For inquiries, please contact tel. nos. 735-7144, 734-5561 loc. 109.

All of the above activities shall be held at the DJFMH Reception Hall.

The DJFMH reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waived any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated is the most advantageous to the government.

The DJFMH-BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **MARIE THERESE A. PACABIS**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - June 1 & 8, 2005)

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2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081/82

2% w/out taking car 5315577

2% w/out taking car 5315577

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GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PETS

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is in need of

HR MANAGER/PARA-LEGAL OFFICER

Job Qualifications:

- Graduate of Psychology/Behavioral Science Course
- Not more than 35 years old
- With at least five (5) years working experience in labor relation management or related fields

Job Description

Oversee office administration processes which includes hiring and screening of applicants, preparation and implementation of training plan/s, evaluation of employees' performance/productivity, implementation of disciplinary action and general services. Attend to various labor relations management concerns and ensure high efficiency and competitiveness of employees to maintain quality services and customer satisfaction.

Interested applicants may send comprehensive resumé at e-mail: fvrazon@netgazer.com.ph/
arrow@netgazer.com.ph;
or #368 F. San Diego Street,
Veinte Reales, Val. City
or fax at: Telefax No. 2922750

INVITATION TO BID
SUB-HAULER

- 10 Wheeler Winged Van
- For Luzon-Wide trucking requirement
- Driver must have cell phones
- Each truck must have a 4-man helper complement
- Trucks must have comprehensive insurance

For queries, contact Mitch or Vanessa
(02) 931-8346/951-0679

(PDI - June 8, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY
Cebu Maritime Regional Office
Ground Floor CCCI Center, cor. 11th & 13th Avenues
North Reclamation Area, Cebu City

Case No. CMRO 05-117

RE : Application for grant of Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) to operate a liner service in the operation of its ship/s in its/their applied route for the carriage of passengers and cargoes and to charge deregulated rates and to operate under a deregulated schedule of trips pursuant to Republic Act No. 9295 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

WILLIAM MICHAEL SHIPPING CORPORATION,
Applicant.

x- -x

ORDER

This refers to the Application for grant of Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) to operate the following ship/s in its/their route/s, under the following sailing frequency/ies, schedule of trips and rates:

FOR TRAMP OPERATIONS:

Name of Ship	Area of Operation	Service/s Offered/to be Offered
MTKR W. MICHAEL-1	Any ports in the Phils	Carriage of liquid Cargo
MTKR GAMING	Any ports in the Phils	Carriage of persistent oil

The Applicant shall cause the publication of this Order once in a newspaper once in any of the five (5) major newspapers of national circulation in the Philippines.

The Applicant shall likewise simultaneously cause the posting of this Order in a conspicuous place at the affected ports, ships, Applicant's premises, passenger terminal/s and ticketing offices, as applicable.

The Applicant shall present the jurisdictional, qualification and documentary requirements in a summary proceeding to be conducted on 10 June 2005 at 2:00 p.m. at the Hearing Room, Cebu Maritime Regional Office, Ground Floor, CCCI Bldg., cor 11th and 13th Avenues, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City which is within seven (7) days from the date of publication/posting.

The Applicant shall be required to make a written Formal Offer of Evidence (FOE), afterwhich, the application is deemed submitted for resolution/decision.

WITNESS, the Honorable Administrator, VICENTE T. SUAZO, JR. this 3rd day of June 2005 in Cebu City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) GLENN G. CABANEZ
Regional Director

(PDI–June 8, 2005)

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WANTED HI SPEED SEWER 500 PER DAY + FOOD OWN SEWING MACHINE REQUIRED FOR MORE INFO PLS CONT. 8506150 OR 09272770613 MON. TO FRI. 9-5.

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO BLESSED MOTHER
(NEVER KNOWN TO FAIL)

Oh most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this necessity. Oh star of the sea, help me and show herein you are my Mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech You from the bottom of My Heart to succor me in this necessity. There are none that can withstand Your power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recoursed to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this course in your hands (3x). Sweet Mother, I place this course in Your hands (3x) Holy Spirit, You who solve all problems so that I can attain my goal, You who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances in my life You are with me. I want this short prayer. Thank you for all things as I confirm once again that I never want to be separated from You in eternal glory. Thank you for Your mercy towards me and mine. The person must say this prayer 3 consecutive days. After 3 days the request will be granted. This prayer must be published after the favor is granted.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

Massage/Facial Atndant 631-3496

NOTICE OF VACANCY
Division of Pasig and San Juan
TEACHER II Item No. OSEC-DECSB-TCH2-30219-2003

PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER 941-4361

SEND YOUR RESUMÉS INSTANTLY
VISIT US AT www.jobmarketonline.com

DBP
Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION FOR NEGOTIATED OFFER

The Development Bank of the Philippines will entertain offers on a First-Come, First-Served basis at the Asset Management Department, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties:

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM SELLING PRICE
REAL ESTATE			
COM-7	No. 19, Road 7, Pag-asa, Quezon City	240 m² residential/commercial lot (TCT No. N-209559) with bldg. & imp.	P 5,500,000.00
BATAAN			
	Sta. Monica Homes, Sitio Wiswis		
AM-ED-057	Lot - 8 Blk - 8	50 m² TCT No. T-229471	P 175,600.00
AM-ED-058	12 9	50 m² TCT No. T-229472	P 186,200.00
AM-ED-059	14 20	50 m² TCT No. T-229492	P 182,500.00
AM-ED-060	27 20	50 m² TCT No. T-229480	P 175,000.00
BATANGAS			
AM-MC-061	Bo. Bawi, Padre Garcia	4,545 m² agro-industrial lot (TCT T-127899) with bldg. & imp.	P 2,464,600.00
BULACAN			
AM-ED-062	Camia St., Manzano Subd., Brgy. Ibayo, Marilao	294 m² residential lot (TCT T-351876)	P 1,176,000.00
CAVITE			
	Philhomes Ville 1, Brgy. Toclong Kawit	Residential lots with bldg. & imp.:	
AM-ED-063	Lot - 20 Blk - 11	32 m² TCT No. T-1101809	P 318,900.00
AM-MC-064	7 11	32 m² TCT No. T-1101808	P 223,800.00
LAGUNA			
	St. Joseph Village 6, Phase 1, Cabuyao	Residential lots with bldg. & imp.:	
AM-MC-065	Lot - 3 Blk - 11	40 m² TCT No. T-605765	P 187,600.00
AM-ED-066	6 5	40 m² TCT No. T-605719	P 209,200.00
AM-PY-067	8 8	46 m² TCT No. T-605767	P 204,400.00
AM-MC-068	10 8	40 m² TCT No. T-605766	P 212,100.00
AM-CP-071	Lot 23 Blk. 2 San Pablo St. San Carlos Village, Brgy. Banay-Banay, Cabuyao	66 m² residential lot (TCT T-536564) with bldg. & imp.	P 252,100.00
AM-CP-072	Lot 53, Blk 24, So. Fairway Homes Classic, Landayan, San Pedro	45 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-605718) with bldg. & imp.	P 330,000.00
RIZAL			
AM-JA-073	San Jose, Montalban (now Rodriguez)	10,000 m² agro-residential lot (TCT No. 454354)	P 4,790,700.00

Forms for negotiated offers may be obtained from AMD-Acquired Assets.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers: 892-1566/893-7172 or 818-9511 local 2218/2252 for Code starting with AM; 926-1686 and 920-4909 for Code starting with COM.

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI – June 8, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
SENATE
Pasay City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Senate of the Philippines invites all G-EPS registered bidders/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	PRICE OF BID DOCS (Non-refundable)
70 units Desktop Computers, US brand 30 units Laser Printers 70 units Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), US brand, 500VA/300W	Php 2,870,000 Php 420,000 Php 175,000	Php 100.00

The bid documents shall be available to interested contractors at the BAC Secretariat Office, 4/F Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City starting June 8, 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee as indicated above. Also, bid bulletins on the schedules of the pre-bidding, submission and opening of bids and other information will be sent through fax.

All particulars relative to the eligibility, bid evaluation, and award of contract shall be governed by the provisions of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

This Invitation is also advertised with the Government Electronic Procurement System (G-EPS) at www.procurementservice.org.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat Office at telefax no. 552-6601 local 1602 (c/o Rose de Castro or Jo Costo).

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVIEW ALL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, WAIVE ANY DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN AND ACCEPT THE OFFER MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE RIGHT TO CONFISCATE THE BID BOND AND/OR PURSUE APPROPRIATE LEGAL ACTION SHOULD THE WINNING BIDDER REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE AWARD.

FURTHER, THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ASSUMES NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO COMPENSATE OR INDEMNIFY THE BIDDER FOR ANY EXPENSE OR LOSS THAT THEY MAY INCUR IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS UNDERTAKING NOR DOES IT GUARANTEE THAT AN AWARD WILL BE MADE.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARNEL JOSE S. BAÑAS**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--June 8 & 9, 2005)

We are looking for qualified individuals for the following positions:

- **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**
  - Preferably degree holder in landscape architecture.
  - 5 years of experience and show proficiency in free hand graphics, preparing large-scale master plans, site plans, and knowledge of local plant material and preparation of construction documents. Urban design, planning background and knowledge of computer-aided graphics beneficial but not required.
- **PLANNERS**
  - Preferably BS or MS degree from an accredited college or university in urban planning or closely related field in design.
  - Minimum of 5 yrs. of planning related experience in the private sector.
  - Preferably have an understanding of physical planning, show proficiency to assist in preparing large-scale master plans and development regulations. The ability to think creatively and individually is essential. Good writing and communication skills in English are required. Freehand drawing, ability and knowledge of computer-aided graphics and GIS are desirable.

Please send applications by e-mail to: info@amta.com.ph

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY
Cebu Maritime Regional Office
Ground Floor CCCI Center, cor 11th & 13th Avenues
North Reclamation Area, Cebu City

Case No. CMRO 05-129

RE Application for grant of Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) to operate a liner service in the operation of its ship/s in its/their applied route for the carriage of passengers and to charge deregulated rates and to operate under a deregulated schedule of trips pursuant to Republic Act No. 9295 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

VUC SHIPPING & TRADING CORP.,
Applicant.

x- -x

ORDER

This refers to the Application for grant of Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) to operate the following ship/s in its/their route/s, under the following sailing frequency/ies, schedule of trips and rates

FOR TRAMP OPERATION:

Name of Ship	Area of Operation	Service/s Offered/to be Offered
MV CHRISTIAN-1	Any ports in the Phils	Carriage of cargoes only

The Applicant shall cause the publication of this Order once in a newspaper once in any of the five (5) major newspapers of national circulation in the Philippines.

The Applicant shall likewise simultaneously cause the posting of this Order in a conspicuous place at the affected ports, ships Applicant's premises passenger terminal/s and ticketing offices, as applicable.

The Applicant shall present the jurisdictional, qualification and documentary requirements in a summary proceeding to be conducted on 14 June 2005 at 2:00 p.m. at the Hearing Room, Cebu Maritime Regional Office Ground Floor, CCCI Bldg., cor 11th and 13th Avenues, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City which is within seven (7) days from the date of publication/posting.

The Applicant shall be required to make a written Formal Offer of Evidence (FOE). Afterwhich, the application is deemed submitted for resolution/decision.

WITNESS, the Honorable Administrator, VICENTE T. SUAZO, JR. this 3rd day of June 2005 in Cebu City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) GLENN G. CABANEZ
Regional Director

(PDI–June 8, 2005)

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(Every Saturday morning)

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- Empower others to deliver results

1st Session: June 15, 2005
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Schedule: 7 weekly sessions
(Every Wednesday evening)

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- Project enthusiasm
- Structure the presentation
- Urge the audience to action
- Create a positive first impression
- Speak with confidence and clarity

Date: June 28 and 29, 2005
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Schedule: 2 whole days

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SECOND INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY TO BID

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) invites interested parties ("Project Proponents") to prequalify to bid for the MWSS **Treated Bulk Water Supply Project** (the "Project") to supply a total of 400 MLD treated bulk water to the MWSS Concession Areas.

The Project will be implemented in accordance with R.A. No. 7718, (Philippine BOT Law) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) under a Build-Operate-and-Transfer contractual arrangement. The Project Proponent shall be responsible for identifying the proposed water source/s, financing, feasibility study, detailed engineering design, construction, and operation and maintenance of the treated bulk water supply facilities. Contractor(s) to be engaged in the Project shall be identified.

The competitive bidding for the Project will be conducted in accordance with the procurement guidelines of the BOT Law.

The new Prequalification Documents may be obtained from the Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC), Office of the MWSS' Senior Deputy Administrator, located at the Ground Floor, Engineering and Operations Building, MWSS Complex, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines, starting on May 31, 2005 until June 27, 2005 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php1,500.00). Only those who purchased the new Prequalification Documents, which contain detailed instructions to applicants, will be allowed to submit applications to prequalify.

Applications to Prequalify should be submitted in the required number of copies, in sealed envelopes, to the above address not later than **2:00 p.m.** (Manila time) of **July 26, 2005**. Reference time shall be the bundy clock located at the same office indicated above. Late submissions shall not be accepted.

The Prequalification Conference is scheduled at 2:00 p.m. on June 23, 2005 at the MWSS Board Room, 5th Floor MWSS Building, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City.

The MWSS reserves the right to reject any or all applications to prequalify and any or all bids, and declare a failure of prequalification and/or bidding or not award the contract where such award will not redound to the benefit of the MWSS and the public.

The MWSS assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the applicants and/or bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of their application and bids.

(Sgd.) ORLANDO C. HONDRADE
Administrator

(PDI--May 25, June 1 & 8, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road Pasay City, Metro Manila

SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATE

I, **MANUEL C. SAN JOSE**, Corporate Secretary of the Manila International Airport Authority, do hereby certify that, at the 253rd Board Meeting dated 30 May 2005, the MIAA Board passed the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 2005-030

"**RESOLVED**, That, the authority of Management to offer to the public Passenger Assistance Service for a fee, on a voluntary basis and for an initial period of three (3) months, as follows:

Meet and Assist Service (Airport Courtesy only)

Individual Rate	-	Php 800
Group Rate/Flight		
2-5 pax	-	Php 800/pax
In excess of 5	-	Php 500/pax

be approved as it is hereby approved, subject to existing rules and regulations".

"**RESOLVED, FURTHER**, That, said rate shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in newspaper of general circulation".

That, the foregoing Resolution is still in full force and effect, and has not been repealed, amended, or modified as of this date.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed and affixed the seal of the MIAA to this Secretary's Certificate this 6th day of June 2005 in Pasay, Metro Manila.

(Sgd.) **MANUEL C. SAN JOSE**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI--June 8 & 15, 2005)

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SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City; Tel. Nos. 843-8838/30; Fax No. 843-9223
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Magallanes Village, Makati City; Tels. 852-8228; 852-7284

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• MANDALUYONG
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City; Telefax 724-4139; 726-2044

• MANILA
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Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St., Manuguit, Manila
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*"I know that my Redeemer lives and
on the last day I shall rise again; In my
body I shall look on God my savior."*
John 19: 25-26

In Loving Memory of

BONIFACIO "Boni" ARAGON TAMAYO, JR.

*Who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on June 5, 2005 at the age of 62.*

He is survived by his wife **Edith**, children **Charmaine, Bonifacio Toribio III, Michael Bonito**; daughter-in-law Pia Marie; granddaughter Michaela; parents Bonifacio, Sr. (†) and Gloria (†); brothers and sisters Aurora & Vidal de la Vega, Carlos & Lilia, Irene, Gloria & Jeff Myers, Sis. Merriam of the Holy Spirit (OCD), Lina & Gil Velazco, Clemente & Eden, Helen & Gavino de Guzman, Carmelo & Hermie, Emmanuel & Imelda; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

In lieu of flowers, your donation for the construction of church and prayer garden of Carmelite Monastery of St. Teresa, Mati, Davao Oriental will be appreciated.

His remains lie in state at the Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes, Camus St., Davao City. Interment will be on Saturday, June 11, 2005 after the 7:00 a.m. Mass at the Carmelite Monastery, Bajada, Davao City.

Masses will be held at the following churches:

Redemptorist Church, Bajada, Davao City	June 6-14; 5-6 pm
Carmelites of St. Teresa, Mati, Davao Oriental	June 6-14; 6-7 am
Monastery of the Holy Family, Tugbok, Davao City	June 6-14; 6-7 am
Don Bosco Church, Pasay Road, Makati City	June 6-14; 7:30-8:30am
St. Joseph the Worker Chapel, Meralco Cmpd., Ortigas, Pasig City..	June 6-14; 7-8 am
San Antonio de Padua Church, Taytay, Rizal	June 8-16; 6-7 am
St. Paul Church, Juna, Matina, Davao City	June 8-16; 6-7 am

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"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."

— Psalm 21:15

---

*"I am not praying for the world, but for those
you have given me, for they are Yours."*
John 17:9

Our Dearly Beloved

Rev. Fr. Jose O. Aspiras

*Now peacefully rests in the infinite Grace & Goodness
of the Lord on the 1st day of June, 2005
at the age of 83.*

His remains lie in state at the Basilica Church of Our Lady of Charity in Agoo, La Union.

Interment will be on Friday, June 10, 2005 at the Agoo Public Cemetery, immediately following the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

His surviving sister Gloria; brother **Alejandro**, in-laws **Bruno** and **Jacoba**, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, other relatives and friends is requesting for your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

CLASSIFIEDS

NFA assures presence of low-priced rice in markets

THE NATIONAL Food Authority assured today that the public may continues to buy NFA rice at subsidized prices in accredited rice outlets nationwide as the agency continuous to regularly deploy its personnel to monitor rice prices and supply. As of May 26, some 57 markets were being monitored in Metro Manila alone by NFA personnel under the food agency's Palengke Watch program.

From these markets, a total of 645 rice retailers were monitored including 73 Bigasan ni Gloria sa Pelengke (BGP) and Targeted Rice Distribution Program (TRDP) outlets, 244 accredited individual rice retailers and 328 commercial rice outlets.

The monitoring teams were scattered in various districts of Metro Manila such as Quezon City, Manila, North, South and East districts.

Based on a report from the agency's Enforcement, Investigation and Prosecution Department (EIPD), the prevailing price of commercial rice was observed between P19 to P42 per kilogram. Meanwhile, NFA rice remains unchanged at P16 and P18 per kilogram for regular-milled (RMR) and well-milled rice (WMR), respectively.

The NFA monitoring teams also watch for irregularities by unscrupulous traders such as overpricing and diversion of stocks. Violators face cancellation of their permits to operate. For more information on NFA Palengke Watch and other NFA programs, please send inquiries via Text NFA through mobile number 0917-6210927. For information on programs of the Department of Agriculture, please visit the DA's official website at www.da.gov.ph.

NFA-FDC conducts training on thermal processes for canned foods

THE NATIONAL Food Authority's Food Development Center (FDC) will conduct a training on "Establishment of Thermal Processes for Canned Foods" on June 21-24 at the FDC Compound, FTI Complex in Tagig City.

Designed for technical staff in the food canning industry, the training course aims to upgrade their technical capability in establishing adequate thermal processes for canned foods.

The course will consist of lecture-discussions, hands-on exercises and demonstrations.

The course fee is P6,200 per person inclusive of meals and a shuttle bus service from Makati to FDC and back.

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Amelia S. Bautista, Food Development Center, National Food Authority, FTI Complex, Tagig City at telephone numbers 838-4014 to 16, 838-4478, 838-4561 and 838-4601; or at Fax No. 838-4692 and 838-4016 and at E-mail address: infofdc@pacific.net.ph.

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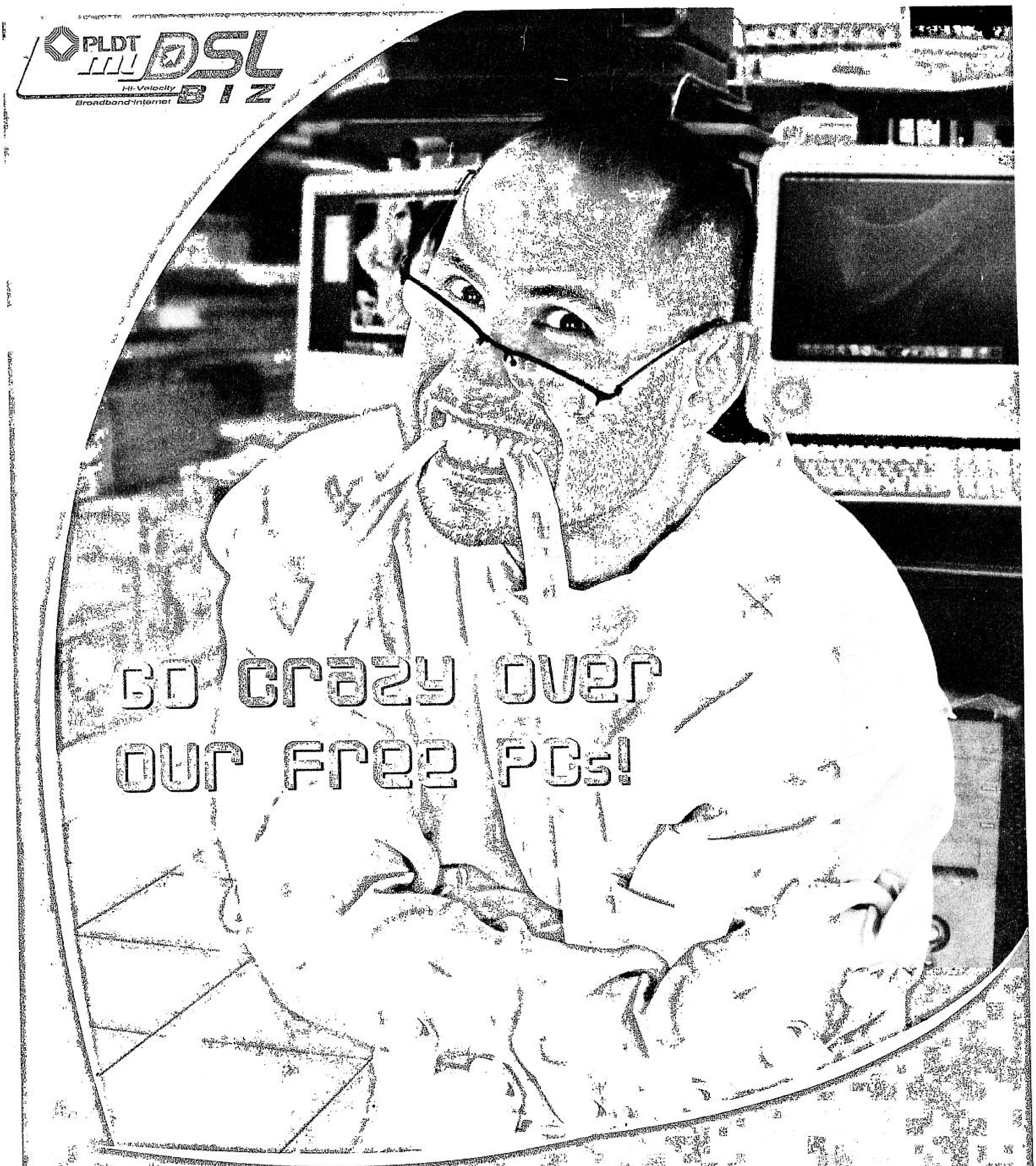

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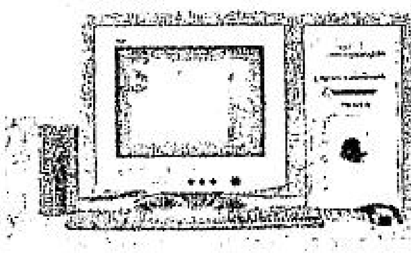

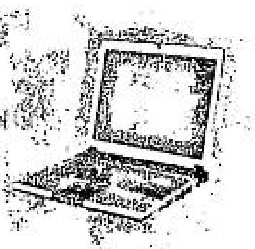

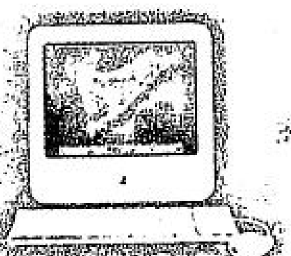

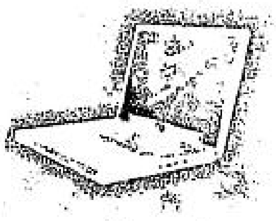

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MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

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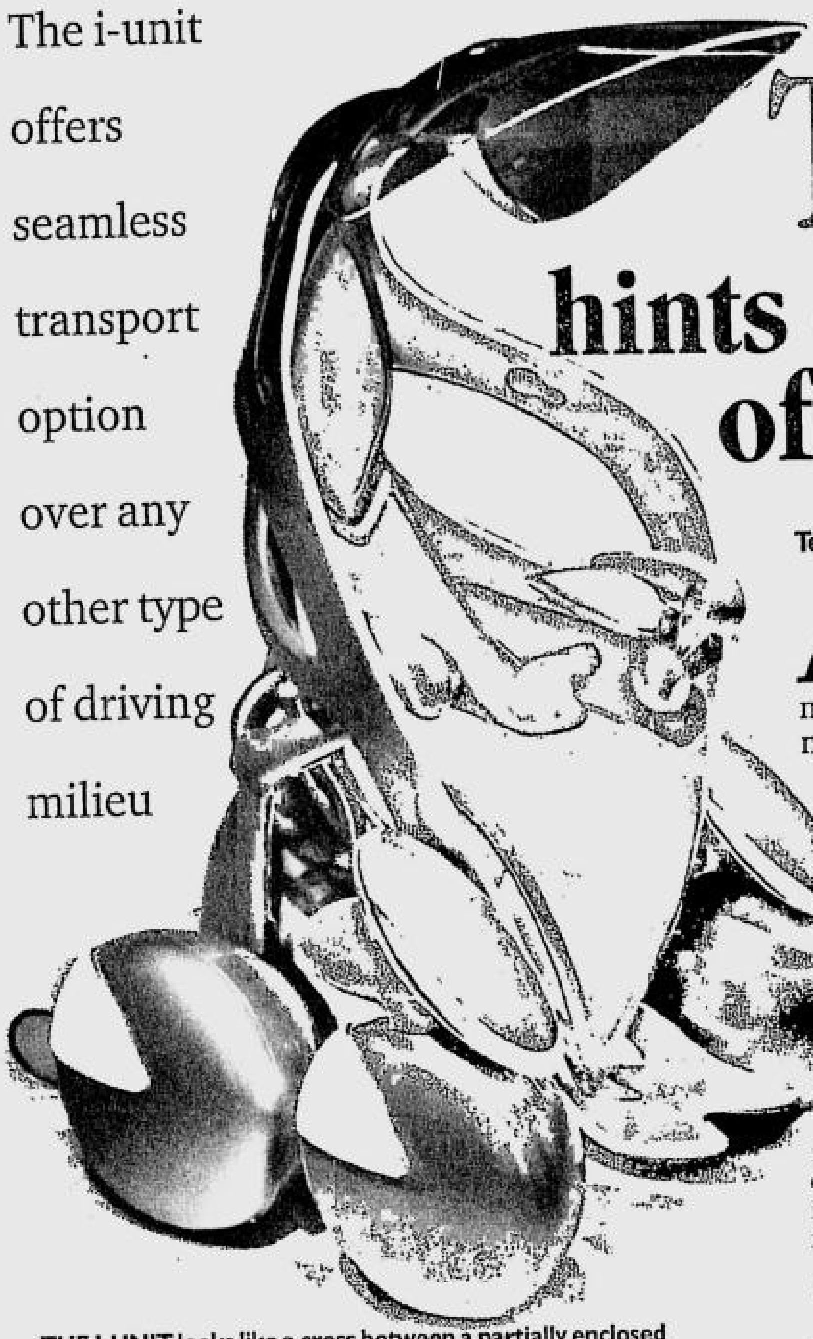
The i-unit offers seamless transport option over any other type of driving milieu



THE I-UNIT looks like a cross between a partially enclosed motorcycle, an open wheel racer and a speedy vehicular exoskeleton.

2005 WORLD EXPO

Toyota hints on future of mobility

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

AICHI, Japan—It wasn't long ago when we got our first glimpse of the Segway Human Transporter, a self-balancing motorized transportation device with two wheels on a single axle.

It doesn't run on gas, can shuttle a person from one place to the next in less time than it takes to walk (and with less effort than it takes to ride a bike), and takes up no more space than the average pedestrian.

Developed by American inventor Dean Kamen and unveiled in December 2001, the Segway HT quickly became the prototype for future urban transportation.

"We have to think about the best form of mobility for each of us. Freedom of movement—like this type of device provides—brings out the individual in each of us, directly affecting society and our planet as well," says Yasuhiro Yomoda of Toyota Motor Corp.

Similar device

For its part, Toyota has also developed a similar personal transport device first unveiled during the 2003 Tokyo Motorshow.

Called the i-unit, the personal transport device offers personal mobility in an ultra compact size with variable positioning, enabling the passenger to move among other people in an upright position in low speed mode, and a low center of gravity that ensures stable handling when the vehicles recline.

"For decades, we have been driving alone in cars with capacity for four to five people so it's about time we need to think about more efficient ways to move around, to make getting around easier and to make better use of the planet's energy," reveals Yomoda.

Single person transport

The i-unit looks like a cross between a partially enclosed motorcycle, an open wheel racer and a speedy vehicular exoskeleton for single person transport.

Twelve of these units can be seen performing at the Toyota Group Pavilion in the duration of the 2005 World Expo, which goes on until September.

According to its chief engineer Yoshiaki Kato, the exposed design of the i-unit is inspired by the leaf explaining that such organic shape is needed for the device to blend in with the green landscape of the future.

In fact, its body is built using environment-friendly plant-based materials such as kenaf (a bast fiber crop that has been used for a long time as cordage, ropes, etc. and in papermaking.)

Allowing interaction

When riding the i-unit, the passenger sits with his or her eye in the same level as those with the people around to allow interaction.

The i-unit's stance changes, too, with its

TOYOTA/ C2

i-unit's specs

LENGTH: 1.1 meters when upright and 1.8 meters when reclined
WHEELBASE: 0.540 meter when upright and 1.3 meters when reclined
HEIGHT: 1.8 meters when upright and 1.250 when reclined
WIDTH: 1.04 meters
MAXIMUM SPEED: Up to 80 kph at high-speed mode
POWER SOURCE: Lithium Ion Battery
DRIVE SYSTEM: In-wheel motors at the rear
WEIGHT: 180 kg

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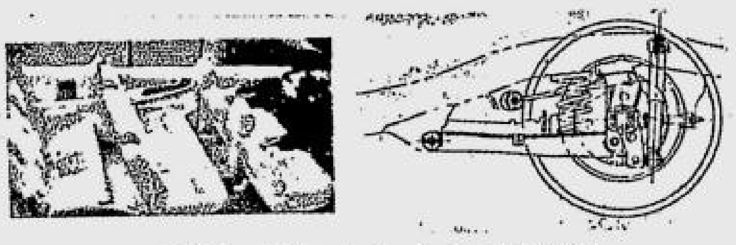

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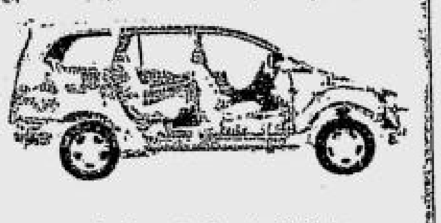

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RECALL OF 12,480 CIVICS

Honda Cars says sorry for P8-M mistake

2003 HONDA Civic

By Tessa R. Salazar

We made a brave step of announcing it, and we're sorry to the owners," said Honda Cars Philippines Inc. deputy head for marketing Arnel Doria recently, when asked about the recall of 12,480 Civic units sold from 2001 to 2004.

The biggest so far among locally assembled vehicles, Honda's recall started Monday, June 6. The recall intends to replace the metal bands that hold the fuel tank in place.

The metal bands will be replaced at no cost to the customer, but which would set HCP back P8 million.

Honda had sent letters to Civic owners last June 2 calling their attention to the problem and instructing them to get in touch with their dealers or the Honda hotline 1-800-1000-HONDA (46632) to schedule replacements.

Not included

HCPI said all Civic units manufactured January 2005 onward already had the correct metal bands in place, and were not included in the recall campaign. Other Honda models CRV, City, Accord, Jazz, HRV, Odyssey and Legend are likewise not included.

With just a handful of recall-related customers trooping to the dealerships on the first day (about 100 in Honda Cars Makati and 30 in another dealership), the average waiting time for the part to be replaced was an hour and 30 minutes.

Honda expects more owners to check their units in as the days pass, as it vowed to keep its dealerships open for the free part replacement until all the metal bands had been changed. Doria said the concerned Civic owners had so far been cooperative.

Prompt action

"Everybody was appreciative and thanked the dealers for its prompt action," he said.

"Hopefully, this would be good for Honda and for the industry. Other companies might see that we should not be afraid of a recall." He added, however, that he would not expect 100 percent positive reception of the recall move among all the owners.

According to HCPI procedures, Civic owners who do not respond to the letter or visit the dealers after 30 days will be called one by one. A group has been assigned to track down owners who have changed their addresses.

Honda dealers were initially worried that all 12,840 owners would troop to the dealerships within three days after the announcement.

Metal band

The defective metal bands, manufactured locally, were found to be longer by a few millimeters, causing the metal bands to slacken and lose its hold on the fuel tank. Continuous engine vibration and the car's movement could potentially weaken the bands, eventually causing them to snap and the fuel tanks to detach.

A broken metal band was handed over to HCPI in February 2004 when a customer reported that it inexplicably broke and detached from the fuel tank. Afterward, 10 more similar cases were reported. Honda continued its investigations and simulations on the affected part.

2002 HONDA Civic

Metallurgical analyses were sought with the assistance of the Department of Science and Technology's Metal Industry Research and Development Center. Tests on the breaking point of the metal band showed that the material itself was strong enough.

However, vibration tests involving the band and its attachment to the tank showed that constant vibration, especially on rough roads, could cause eventual detachment and breakage.

The fuel tank, the metal band and a cutout of the Civic's body were then sent to Honda's headquarters in Japan for evaluation. There, cameras were mounted at the tank, at the metal band and at the body and then subjected to the "rough road machine" to simulate the car running on rough conditions.

Honda Japan found out that the band was a few millimeters longer than its counterparts in other countries. The slack in the metal could only be detected when a 25-kg weight on the band was placed and moved.

Honda Japan eventually declared that continuous vibration over time would cause cuts on the metal band.

Unusual press conference

HCPI started the first step of the recall when it called for a press conference to publicly announce the recall even if letters were already sent to concerned Civic owners. Doria said HCPI has also related the matter to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for publication on its website, even if the affected parts were not exported and the affected local production of the Civic units were identified as available only in the Philippines.

So, why did Honda choose to publicly announce its recall instead of confining the matter to the usual "silent campaign" as practiced by other car manufacturers?

Doria replied the company would rather make clear explanations rather than be mired in the ugly rumors resulting from speculations fueled by a "silent" carmaker.

"When we made the decision, we didn't know what the (public) reaction would be. This is the first time (we made a recall) on a scale like this. The dealers were initially apprehensive, but so far Honda owners who have gone to the showrooms are happy that we are doing it," he said.

He added that Honda has taken a proactive stance on the issue instead of being defensive. Doria, however, could not say if an affected Civic unit would pose too much of a danger for its driver and passengers at any given moment. He advised owners to set an appointment with the dealerships as soon as possible to replace the metal bands.

In a worse case scenario, Doria said that HCPI is already legally accountable for any damages caused by the defective parts.

The Civic's fuel tank is located between the trunk and the rear passenger seat. A recall, identified by manufacturers in batches; is an option allowed for manufacturers or assemblers to cure and/or correct specific defects in vehicles that would not hamper its value or its usage but may pose some safety concerns in the short or long-term.

Improvements at NLEX; new Volvo and Isuzu

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

I CONTINUE to notice improvements at the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

For one, I find many motorists following the rules. Truck drivers now stay on their designated lanes, while other slow-moving vehicles now rarely occupy the fast lane (left).

For another, I can see patrol cars moving up and about. Their visibility has surely deterred motorists from engaging on their wayward ways.

* * *

The secret to the "new face" of the NLEX is the establishment of the Tollways Management Corp. (TMC). I doff my hat to Ping de Jesus, the top honcho of the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), for this recent move as it envisions to pinpoint problem areas with a view to further improving the services at NLEX for the benefit of our motorists.

The TMC is now tasked primarily to: 1) operate and maintain the NLEX; 2) deliver the MNTC promise of safety, security and comfort; and, 3) focus on total motorist satisfaction.

The TMC's themes include safety, enforcement, driver education and customer service.

* * *

Under its safety heading are: 1) enhanced signage and markings; 2) ample lighting; 3) fully equipped and well-trained response teams on standby and round-the-clock; and, 4) emergency roadside services in partnership with professional motoring and medical emergency organizations.

On enforcement: 1) more frequent patrol loops; 2) strict implementation of regulations and traffic laws; and, 3) firmer management of vehicle speed.

On driver education: 1) the issuance of motorist's handbook; and, 2) seminars for drivers and operators.

On customer service: 1) emergency hotline (580-8911) for prompt response to requests and inquiries; 2) five customer service centers for product and services inquiries (EC Tag, Magnetic Swipe Cards, Contact-less Smart Cards); and, 3) six information centers.

* * *

Because of the improved road conditions at the NLEX, studies now show that accidents are down to staggering low levels.

Central Luzon, where the NLEX is situated, has an accident rate due to road defects at 0.018 per thousand vehicles. This is multiplied by an underdeclaration factor of 2.0. The World Health Organization, in a 1996 study, estimates the underdeclaration factor to be as high as 4.51.

In further studies, 45 of every 1,000 vehicles are involved in traffic accidents arising from road defects. Surely, the improved NLEX is projected to eliminate these data.

Since it opened early this year, the top three violations at NLEX are overloading (trucks are the main culprit), swerving and over-speeding.

* * *

I welcome the move by the TMC to launch the Motorists' Handbook as this should serve as guide for our motorists in their use of the expressway. In the handbooks are basic courtesies, traffic rules and regulations and what to do during cases of emergency.

The handbook is the result of consultations with the Toll Regulatory Board, Land Transportation Office, Automobile Association Philippines and the MNTC.

Written in English, it will soon have a Tagalog version.

* * *

The guiding principle behind every Volvo car is safety—uncompromising, reliable, consistent. Volvo's unwavering commitment to safe driving, as well as its attention to traveling convenience and luxury, has once again proven that the name is here to stay for a long, long time.

I say that again in the wake of the many models that have rolled out from the assembly lines the past few months. I hope safety is paramount in each design of the vehicles unleashed one after the other by Volvo's chief rivals.

Listen to Assar Garibelsson and Gustaf Larson, the founders of Volvo: "Cars are driven by people. The guiding principle behind everything we make at Volvo, therefore, is—and must remain—safety."

* * *

In the latest issue of Volvo Magazine sent to me just last week by Loi Concepcion, there's an interesting article about the Volvo S40.

Called "The New Economy," the Volvo S40 now comes in two models: Volvo S40 1.6 and S40 1.6D. The power of the 1.6 gasoline is 74 kW and the 1.6D diesel 81 kW.

Both the 1.6 gasoline and 1.6 turbodiesel are big on hightech: where some rivals are literally weighed down by their heavy cast iron engines, these new units are made from lightweight aluminum and feature four-valve technology as well as the very latest electronic fuel injection systems.

The benefit of the lower engine weight means not only excellent fuel economy, but it also has implications for better handling and performance and, in the particular case of the Volvo S40 1.6D, the best-ever fuel consumption from a car in the Volvo range—4.91/100 km (combined).

When it comes to torque, though, the diesel engine has the advantage—240 Nm versus the 150 Nm of the 1.6 gasoline engine. Extra torque, of course, means smooth takeoffs from standing traffic and not having to change down two or three gears to overtake.

Really, Volvo, not really known to carry diesel engines for years, has come a long way.

Take a bow, Albert and Lyn. And when are we going to cover the Volvo Masters golf again?

Just say when and I'll come running.

* * *

ISUZU ITCH. "Isuzu engineers designed the all-new Alterra with the modern lifestyle in mind, achieving a delicate balance between performance and versatility." Wow! That's from Tim and Ronald? I was told this new Isuzu babe is again proving to be another Isuzu bestseller, in the tradition of D-Max. I can't wait to lay my eyes, if not my hands, on it.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Apples, not coffee, will help you wake up faster in the morning. So from hereon, eat one apple before you drive your way to the office.

Toyota hints on future of mobility

From page C1

height adjusting depending on speed, which in return, depends on driving environment.

"The i-unit offers seamless transportation option over any other type of driving environment," describes Michinobu Sugata of Toyota Motors Corp.

In low-speed mode, the i-unit moves in an upright position and at 1.8 meters (about 5'10"), the passenger is generally within the eye level of most people walking on foot.

In high-speed mode (it tops 80 kilometers per hour during test), the i-unit reclines to 1.25 meters (a little over four feet) so that its center of gravity lowers to ensure stable handling.

Drive-by-wire technology and intuitive handling enable the passenger to maneuver on the spot, turn and drive at high speed at will.

Personal recognition

The i-unit features a personal recognition system that distinguishes passengers by their palms and face, and a driver monitor system provides music and information according to the driver's emotions, physical condition and preferences.

"The body color can also be customized with light-emitting diodes (LED)," adds Sugata.

An IT controller transmits various driver support information using sound, light and vibration, and a display system detects and superimposes vehicle position over an actual view of the environment.

These features together with a voice and sound system allow for intuitive, user-friendly and realistic communication.

A reality

Although the battery-operated (lithium ion) i-unit will not be available in the market soon, Yomoda explains that the i-unit's performance during the duration of the expo is meant to show the world that the device is no longer a fantasy but a reality that can be made available in the near future.

"Of course, there will still be changes in the i-unit as some technologies that we would like to have included are not yet fully developed today. However, we have succeeded in including some futuristic control technology such as the intuitive drive by wire controls," reveals engineer Makoto Morita, a member of the i-unit's research and development team.

Morita is referring to the i-unit's drive controller, which replaces the steering wheel. This drive controller lets the passenger go anywhere, controlling speed and direction with just one hand.

Also, the i-unit's existing driver support system can detect vehicles around using various sensors, which can tell the i-unit's position in relation to other cars and road infrastructure, which promotes safer and more comfortable driving.

Morita also reveals that the i-unit can drive by itself using automated driving system but it would need a dedicated lane which the future road system may provide.

THE I-UNITS' daily performance (seen here with another concept unit called the i-foot) at the 2005 World Expo in Japan, meant to show the units are no longer just an idea.

The honest Lancer

CATCH MY DR

Andre Palma

LANCER. Speak the word and the resulting mental image is a very powerful one: a man on an armor plated mount, wielding a big stick with a sharp metal edge. Aggressive, intimidating and obviously cavalry-inspired, it is unfortunate that the model name is only apt for a scant few of variants of this Mitsubishi staple.

The rally-derived Evolution series fits the "hard-charging" image, as it would be difficult to resist driving it in any other manner, given power in the neighborhood of 280 bhp, all-wheel drive and styling that gets issued speeding tickets in parking lots. Regrettably, this will be the last time the word "evolution" gets mentioned in this week's column, as this is not the Lancer we are talking about.

Sensible vehicle

In the everyday world, a large section of the Lancer driving public owns a tamer more domesticated vehicle: a sincere family sedan with usually never more than a 1600 cc engine and a shade over 120 bhp at best. The "real" Lancer was always a sensible vehicle, its specifications never far from what the Philippine market dictated and expected. This always translated into a well-appointed car, with good basic features that anyone could drive.

Lancers were really more of day-to-day workhorses than taut thoroughbreds. Technically that is not the case anymore, as Mitsubishi has decided to gift us with a "real world" Lancer with a tad more motivation in its gallop.

Lancer 1.8 MX Ltd.

Enter the Lancer 1.8 MX Limited, a vehicle with a bigger engine and "improved" performance. In an act solidifying the industry-wide move of equipping top of the line family sedans with bigger engines, Mitsubishi has gone to a Euro2 emission compliant, 4G93 1.8-liter inline-four powerplant with a 123 bhp output. These engine numbers are far from heart stopping and will never cause drool to drop but the secret of the 1.8 Lancer MX is in the sauce, err… in the transmission, I mean.

The decision to mate the engine to an Invecs-III CVT (Continuously Variable Transmission) unit results in a driving experience that is sure to surprise even the jaded test driver, as long as they don't expect Darwinian "survival of the fittest" performance from it.

Based on a system of thick belts made to run up and down two opposing cones with teeth, CVT transmissions have the unique characteristic of highlighting engines with decent amounts of torque; something the Lancer's engine has is spades. Its factory claimed 161 Nm is higher than most 2.0-liter inline four engine outputs in the Philippine market today.

Since typical CVT gear ratios are infinitely adaptable and computer-aided, it is possible to almost constantly keep the engine in its power band. This allows for more efficient use of the produced torque, giving a sensation of seamless straight-line acceleration until the engine runs out its capacity to pull.

In open road situations, the 1.8-liter and CVT combo allows the Lancer to promptly achieve the 100 kilometer per hour speed limit on the SLEX. The trick with the transmission is to find the sweet spot of the engine's torque curve, typically the point where further pedal pressure on the accelerator does not dramatically increase the forward motion of the car anymore.

In other words, your right foot does not need to meet the floor pan to get the best out of the Lancer. This insight goes beyond the engine and transmission of this car and best describes its overall character.

Innovation often finds this vehicle late in comparison with the competition, but I think that there is a reason for that. Drive the base model of this car around for a few days and it will remind you of why it has graced the Philippine market for so long—plainly, that there's nothing wrong with it.

Get your hands on one with the bigger engine and the better transmission and be prepared to think about owning one. Now, we are actually talking about a car that is quite pleasing to drive. We judge it for what it is, a decent car with a slightly better engine and a really good transmission choice. It is an honest package that delivers on what is advertised: a competitively priced product that does not promise the moon.

> Lancers were really more of day-to-day workhorses than taut thoroughbreds

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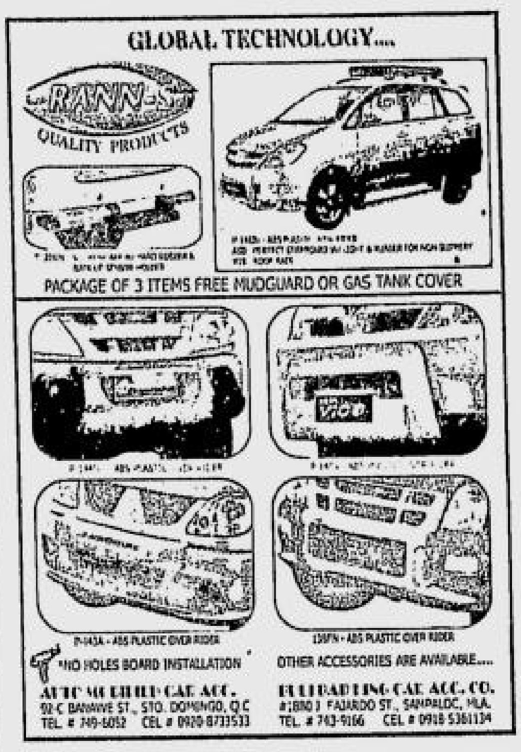

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NEW A6 3.2 FSI EXECUTIVE SALOON

The best, latest Audi technology

AUTO Prominence Corp., the sole and exclusive Philippine registered distributor of Audi, introduces the new top-of-the-line A6 3.2 FSI, with a state-of-the-art engine that replaces the old 2.4- and the 3.0-liter engines in the previous A6. This is the Fuel Stratified Injection (FSI) technology—the future of spark-ignition technology that delivers more torque and power, and is therefore palpably more dynamic and efficient than engines with conventional indirect injection. What's more, it reduces fuel consumption by up to 15 percent.

It is remembered that the prestigious Audi R8 with FSI engine dominated for years in the Le Mans 24-hour endurance race, a fete made possible by this engine's unique combination of power, agility and economy.

Powerful, efficient engine

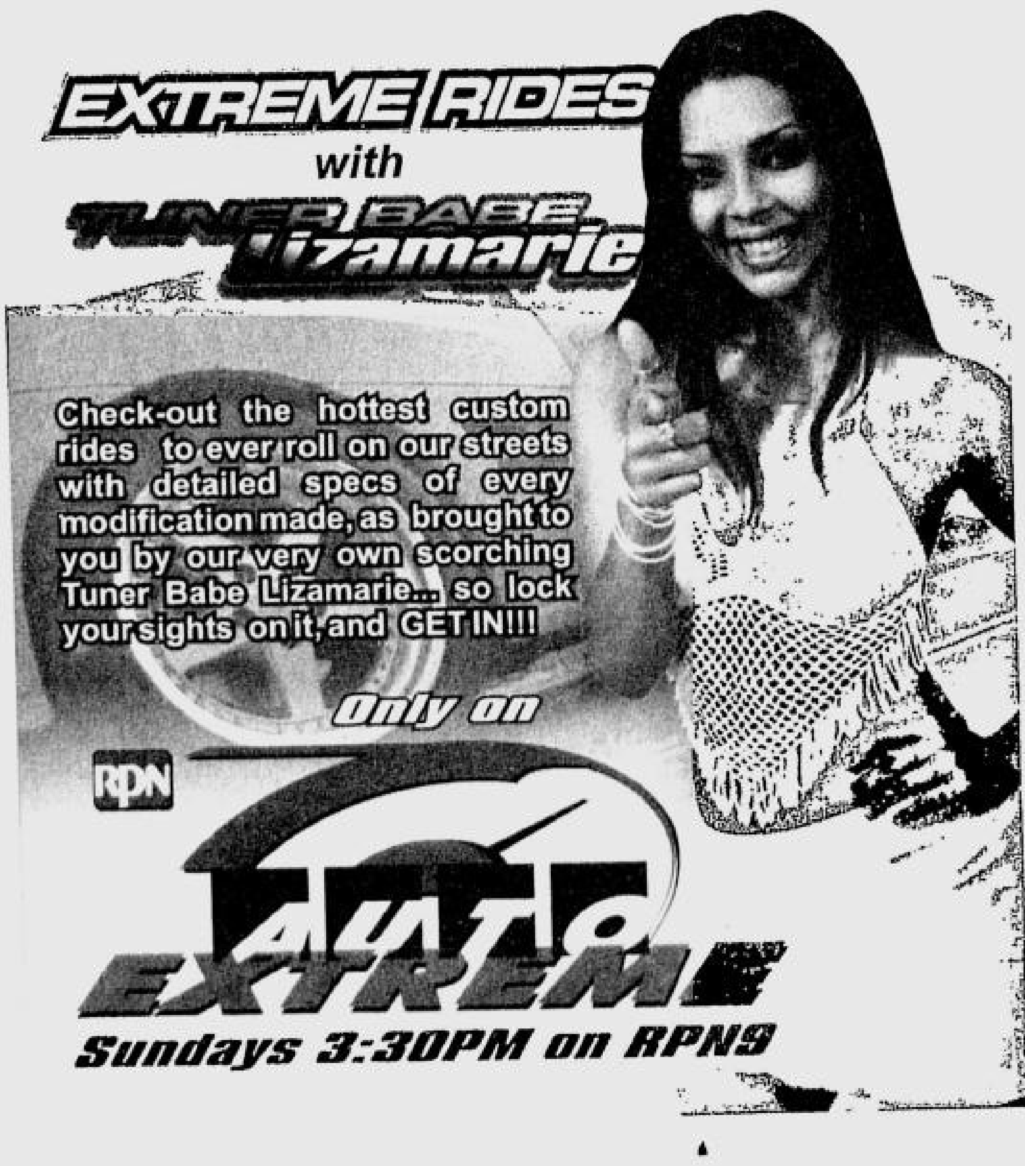
Far from the old, phased-out 3.0-liter engine, the new 3.2 FSI six-cylinder has all the features of a cutting-edge gasoline engine. Direct fuel injection with on-demand fuel supply, four-valve technology, a variable intake manifold and infinitely variable camshaft adjustment gives the driver dynamic and powerful reaction to every movement of the accelerator.

More than 90 percent of the engine's maximum torque is available throughout a wide speed range from 2,400 to 5,500 rpm, a truly unique feature on a naturally aspirated V6 engine. Insofar as the driver is concerned, this means a dynamic and forceful response to every movement of the accelerator pedal plus a broader usable speed range up to 7,200 rpm, hefty torque and excellent fuel efficiency: an average consumption of 9.7 liters of Super grade fuel per 100 km is the best evidence of this engine's efficiency and the special abilities of FSI technology.

Clearly, no other model comes close to this totally innovative engine which is very suitable to the Philippine traffic conditions as it does not only reduce fuel consumption but squeezes the maximum performance out of every drop of fuel. And that exactly what makes a truly powerful and efficient engine.

Complementing the 3.2 FSI are other state-of-the-art attributes like Quattro permanent four-wheel drive; Multi Media Interface "MMI" with TFT color display, high-resolution 7-inch screen, 6-disc CD player and 10 loud speakers; Bose premium surround sound system, power glass sunroof, bi-xenon adaptive headlights and the new trapezoidal design of the single-frame radiator grille.

To best appreciate the exceptional features of the new A6 3.2 FSI, visit Auto Prominence at 2326 Pasong Tamo Extension, Mondays to Fridays, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. or Saturdays and Sundays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or you can call at 843-1640, 843-1649 and 843-1195.



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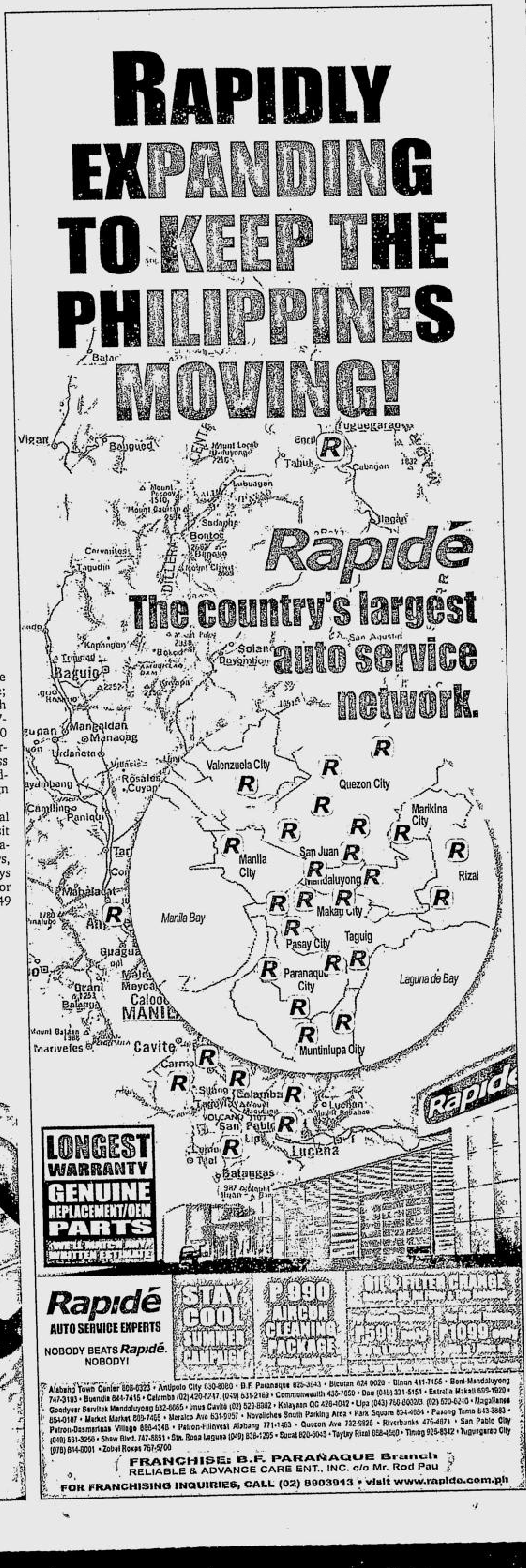

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Easing downtown gridlock

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

SAN FRANCISCO—In the Bay Area, downtown gridlock is as much a problem as in the Central Business District of Makati City, if not more so. Now, reports The San Francisco Chronicle, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority is considering a program similar to that in central London whereby drivers pay for the right to drive down the busiest streets during peak hours.

The idea is not only to ease congestion but also to raise revenue to improve and expand the public transit system.

The Transportation Authority has applied for a $1.3-million federal grant to study how such a traffic program can work, including the potential boundaries, pricing schemes and uses for the extra revenue. They are looking at expanding bus service and opening new bicycle lanes with the added revenue.

3-year study

If the money for the study is granted, the research will begin in autumn and take three years to complete. (Don't you wish that our Metro Manila Development Authority would also conduct a thorough study before imposing new traffic schemes such as the controversial U-turn series on some city streets and pink fences on Edsa?)

Undoubtedly, the presence of London Mayor Ken Livingston in San Francisco this week for the United Nations' World Environment Day conference had something to do with the San Francisco Transportation Authority's initiative.

Livingston claimed that congestion charging zones, as they are known in London, have proved successful since he introduced them two years ago. Independent analyses indicate that congestion has been reduced in central London by 30 percent with 50,000 fewer cars entering the area each day. Moreover, carbon monoxide pollution is down and more people are taking the bus. The increased revenue from the special fee went to the acquisition of more and newer buses.

The right ingredients

In an interview last Friday, Livingston said that San Francisco has the right ingredients—the geography and the basic political sophistication of the electorate—for the congestion charging zone scheme to work. If it can't happen here, he added, it can't happen anywhere in the United States.

Livinston said he was inspired by free-market economist Milton Friedman, who wrote an essay in the 1950s recommending road charges to discourage traffic.

Livingston's traffic program covers eight square miles in central London, the heart of the city's financial, legal and entertainment areas. Cars entering these sectors on weekdays between 7 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. must pay the tax, which is now around $9.50 a trip and will be going up to about $14.

Tracking camera

A camera tracks drivers, capturing the license plate numbers that are then entered into a database. Motorists caught trying to evade the tolls are fined heavily. There are plans to expand the boundaries in London to twice the current size.

When Livingston's traffic reduction program was launched, it was laughed at but has since won greater acceptance. But reaction among retailers has been mixed because while businesses have benefited from getting their deliveries and workers through town more quickly as a result of less congested streets, others have complained that the toll has driven away customers.

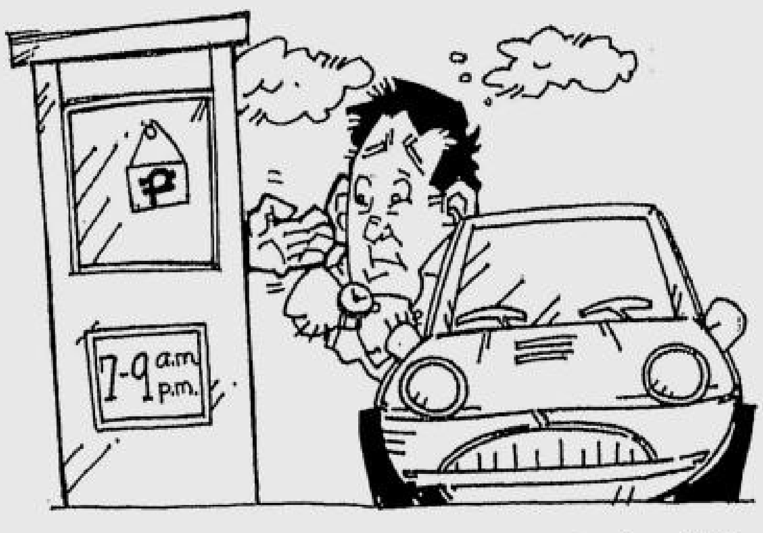
San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom also expressed reservations, saying he is not ready to endorse the idea as it deserves further study. Tilly Chang, the Transportation Authority's deputy director for planning, agreed with the mayor that San Francisco must still conduct technical studies and seek public reaction before such a tax can be enacted.

Slow down

Chang said the areas most likely to be made congestion charging zones are the Financial District and South of Market streets near the Bay Bridge where congestion is worsening.

As an example of how congestion has slowed down traffic flow, a Transportation Authority study showed that the average speed on Montgomery Street has gone from 12.4 miles per hour in 2001 to 8.2 mph last year.

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.)



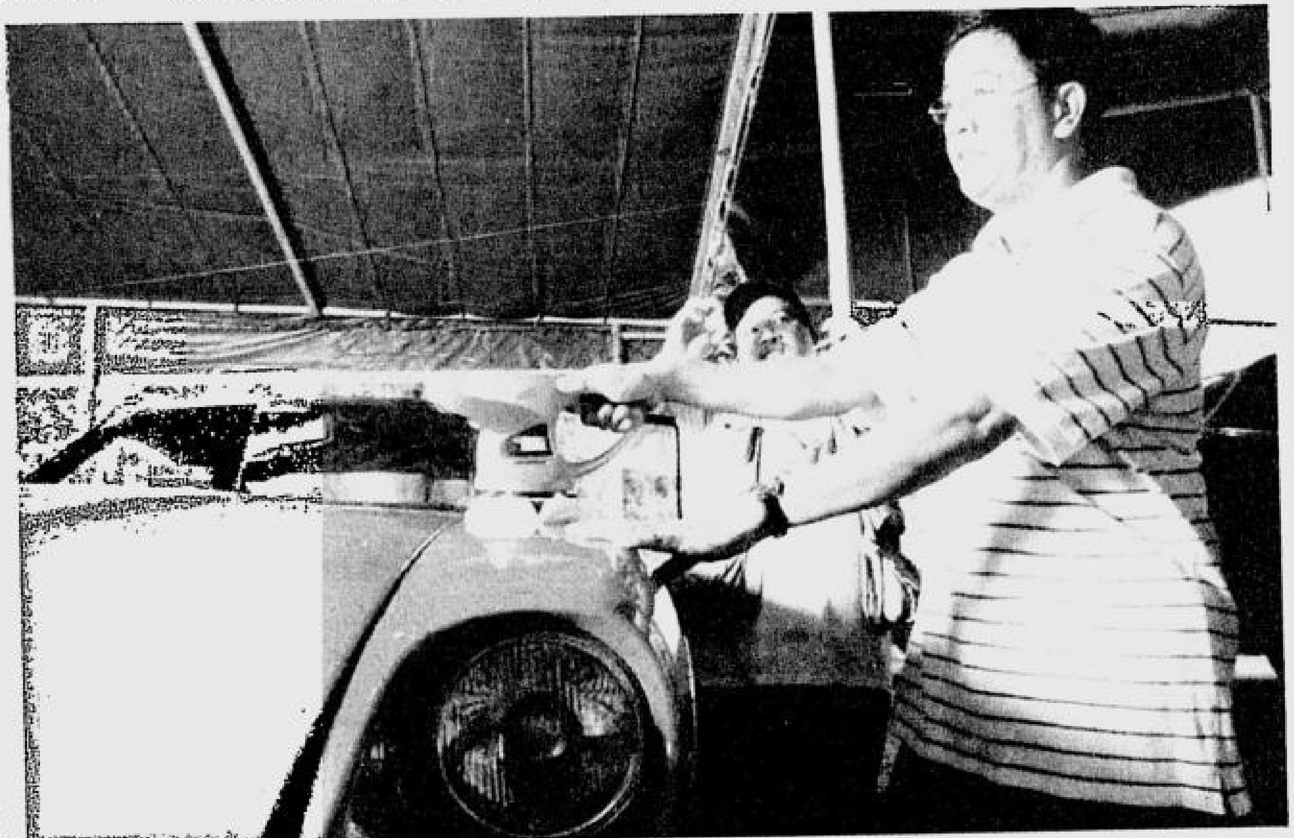
Cito Beltran waxes vintage

A SELF-CONFESSED D.I.Y. guy for many years, Cito explains how it all started for him.

TELEVISION talk show host Cito Beltran usually spends his weekdays at the ABS-CBN studios hosting ABS-CBN News Channel's "Straight Talk" and The Filipino Channel's "Kamusta, Kabayan." On weekends, he drives to his farm in Lipa City, Batangas where he rekindles his passion for tinkering with vintage cars.

Among Cito's collection of vintage cars are a couple of rare customized versions of 1968 Mercedes-Benz station wagons with fintails. "According to experts, these are after-market models especially made in Belgium and not in a Mercedes-Benz plant," he says.

Also part of his collection is the Cadillac of former president Joseph "Erap" Estrada, a 1965 Fleetwood Cadillac. "When Erap and Ronnie were already successful in their careers, they decided to buy Cadillacs for themselves," he explains. Cito was given the Cadillac after the former president found out that Cito collects presidential cars.



USING a Black and Decker KP600, Cito demonstrates how to properly wax a Datsun 240Z.

Cito also owns a 1954 Mercedes 170 that he found in Baguio City; a 1960 Chevy Biscayne which he calls his "Mexican Rod"; and the only Japanese car that made it to the Classic Sports Car Collectors List, a '70s model Datsun 240Z. "It was designed after the Ferrari, the lines are the same but it has a Japanese engine," Cito adds.

Cito also has, in his collection, a 1951 Chrysler Imperial Limousine, the wedding car of Ferdinand Marcos; a 1941 Cadillac, the official parade car of Malacañang Palace used by presidents Quezon, Osmeña, Roxas and Quirino.

But among his vintage car collection, Cito takes pride in a 1904 Richard-Brassier Roadster, the first car in the Philippines. "It's the oldest car in my collection and right now, it's at the Baguio Country Club, on display, in line with the club's centennial celebration," he says.

Cito says that when he acquired the roadster, it was in such poor condition "you can't drive it anymore." Cito recalls that during that time, there were two foreigners who tried to locate the car and were planning to bring it to their country, so he had to ask the help of friends in buying the car which he said was a "national treasure."

"I restored it and when the Baguio Country Club heard about it, they asked me if they could borrow it. So now it's with them and on display at their club," he says.

From junk to vintage car classics

Cito likes the challenge auto restoration brings but he dislikes cars that have been utterly disregarded by its owners. "The worst thing you can do to a car is leave it on open ground where it is subject to nature's elements," he says.

Rust buildup and missing parts are usually what Cito encounters in most of the vintage cars he restores.

To get rid of the rust that has formed in these cars over time, Cito does thorough sanding and in extreme cases, uses a chemical bath to restore these corroded cars to tiptop condition. "Normally we take the body off the chassis and we clean out the chassis using angle grinders and steel brushes. My friends (who are lazy) bring the chassis to a chemical bath place to have it cleaned out."

For parts, Cito gets them from other cars or from the United States or Europe. He may buy old parts from other collectors even if he doesn't need them yet, for future use, and he just stockpiles them in his workshop.

"I might go to your house for a visit and by chance see a part or parts of an old car that I like, I'll buy them from you and load them into my car. Often the owners have parts which they think are no longer of use, like the front end of a Jaguar which I bought," he says.

For Cito, buying a vintage car is like a courtship. "The longest it has taken me to woo a vintage car owner is five months. I'd go to their house every two weeks, bringing apple crumble, until the owner said 'yes.'"

Dream vintage car

For his vintage collection, what does Cito look for in a car? "I look for cars with character, cars that have stories to tell. I now concentrate on presidential cars or what is referred to as significant cars," he says. In fact, Cito has another limousine coming, a 1956 Chrysler imperial limousine. "I'm also aiming for a Rolls Royce, Mustang or a Thunderbird," he adds.

CITO leaves no spot unwaxed, with the help of a Black and Decker KP600.

Car care tips

With such a large collection of vintage cars in his garage, how does Cito keep all of them clean and in tiptop shape?

Like most guys, Cito cleans the interior of his car, then washes and waxes the exterior parts.

Cito finds a Black and Decker dustbuster practical to clean his car. He shares this tip to car owners: vacuum your car regularly. "The dust accumulating is what ruins the air-conditioning condenser," he says.

And on washing cars, Cito shares this valuable tip: don't wash the car every day. "Some guys spend much on having their cars waxed, only to have it washed by their household help. *Sayang naman*," he adds.

Cito advises owners to wax their cars at least once a week. "If you want a really nice finish, buy a whole roll of cotton, it's great for waxing your car because cotton does not scratch the paint," he shares.

Do-it-yourself expert

Being a do-it-yourself (DIY) enthusiast, Cito also uses various power tools like Black & Decker professional drills and sanders to finish just about any repair work—be it in his Pasig house or Lipa farm, at the soonest possible time. "Working with power tools saves time and using it is so easy, I even recommend it to women," Cito shares, saying his wife even has her own set of power tools.

As a straight-talking TV host with an eye for historic cars and a passion for restoring vintage ones, Cito Beltran surely puts his DIY expertise to good use.

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The Dark Knight takes flight

From the world premiere in Tokyo, the INQUIRER swings into action with the first review and reports on the blockbuster return of 'Batman'

By Ruel S. De Vera

LITERALLY cutting edge, the new Bat symbol, and logically the design for the Batarang, is a sleeker, highly stylized and more dangerous reinterpretation of the traditional Bat symbol.

Gone is the gaudy yellow field and the bat itself has been transformed into a true weapon, a nocturnal predator about to strike rather than hang upside down or pose in a spotlight.

That would also be an accurate assessment of director Christopher Nolan's "Batman Begins," a cloak-and-dagger reimagining of the DC Comics character. There is a Batcave full of baggage to be overcome, as "Batman Begins" will have to transcend not only the circus schlock of the Joel Schumacher movies (the mediocre "Batman Forever" and the downright awful "Batman & Robin") but even the distinctive vision of Tim Burton (the moody "Batman" and "Batman Returns," the best of the first four Batflicks).

To do this, Nolan employs a gritty, dark shroud that covers "Batman Begins" with a self-evident seriousness and strength of purpose. "Batman Begins" is just that, an origin story that takes the character back to its tragic, twisted roots and establishes many of the baseline truths about the Dark Knight Detective.

Employing a utility belt of flashbacks reminiscent of his time-bending tricks from his terrific "Memento," Nolan concentrates more on why and how The Batman came to don the cowl. The guilt over his parents' deaths hangs heavy over Bruce Wayne (intense Christian Bale), enough to compel Wayne to travel the world seeking to become a living weapon against crime. He thinks he finds it on a far-off mountain hideaway, where he trains under Ra's al Ghul (Ken Watanabe) and Henri Ducard (Liam Neeson) among the League of Shadows. But when their intentions clash, Wayne returns to a corrupted, endangered Gotham City, where he must take on the alter ego of The Batman.

Superior cast

The most obvious part of Nolan's arsenal is a superior cast: Bale growls and knots his brow with a gravity that defines the incarnation of Batman, a competent acting job that, together with the no-nonsense militaristic Bat-suit, trumpets a refusal to be anything like the previous films.

Though she does appear a little young to be Assistant District Attorney Rachel Dawes, Katie Holmes does just enough to make the role work for her. Scene-stealing Michael Caine is a perfect fit as Alfred the butler, impeccably slinging some of the best lines in the movie. Gary Oldman is comfortably solid as Jim Gordon while Neeson deftly handles his meatiest role in a long while.

As Lucius Fox, Morgan Freeman also adds a welcome substance and spark to a role he could easily have sleepwalked through. An excellent supporting group—Cillian Murphy as the Scarecrow, John Wilkinson as gangster Carmine Falcone and Rutger Hauer as Wayne CEO Richard Earle—adds solidity and heft to the movie.

That same surprising attention to quality

THE DARK/ D2

CHRISTIAN Bale as Batman and Cillian Murphy as Dr. Jonathan Crane

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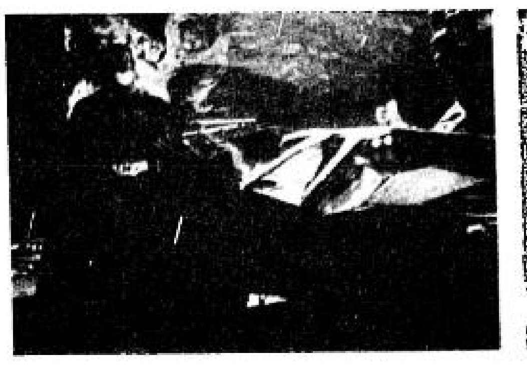

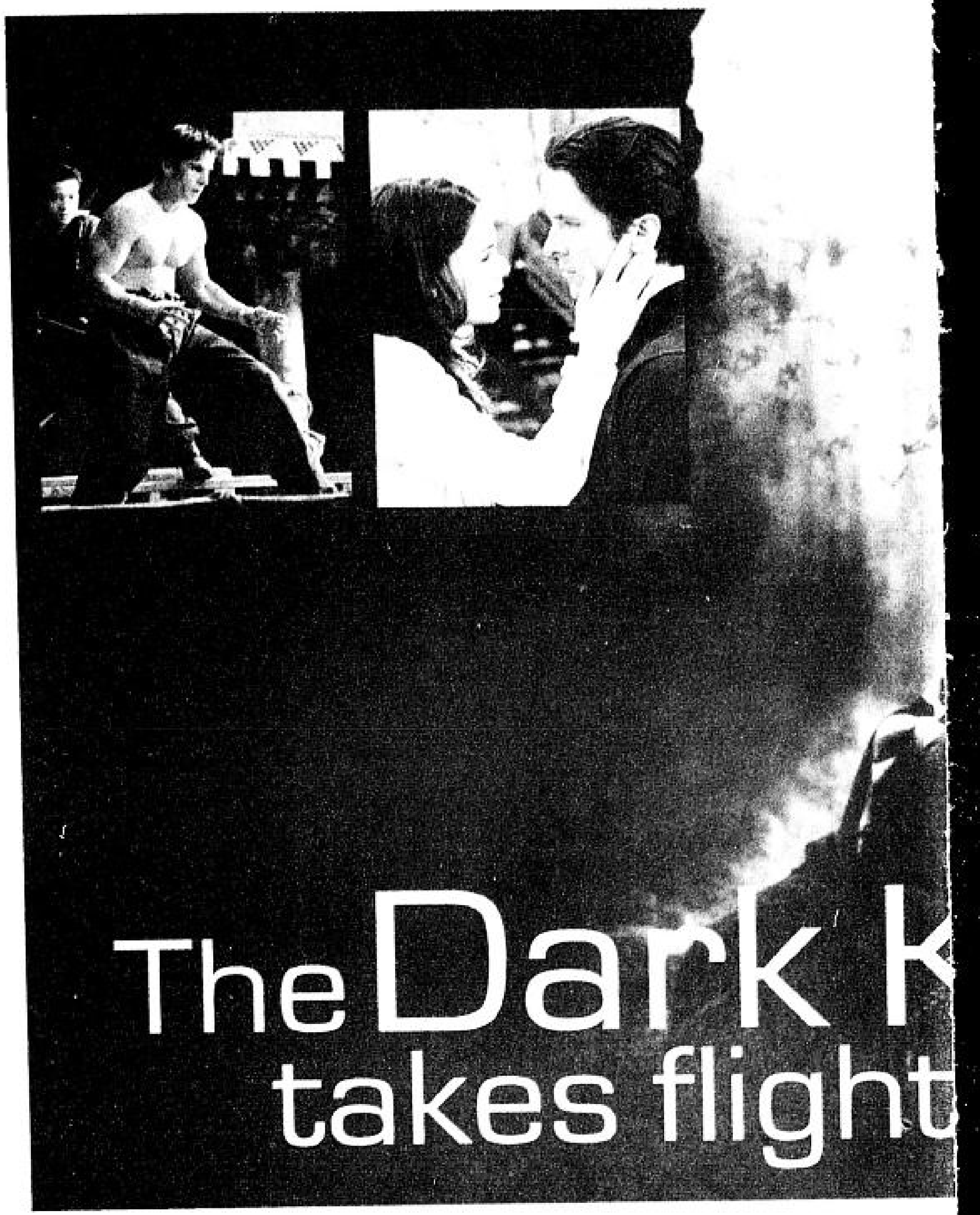

The Dark K takes flight

From page D1

pervades this movie. Even if told in muted tones of black and gray, "Batman Begins" vibrates with texture and urgency. The script by David S. Goyer ("Blade: Trinity") clearly references "The Batman's" darker comic book history, particularly Chuck Dixon's work on "Batman: Year One." Though not as catchy as composer Danny Elfman's anthemic theme from "Batman," the score from the rare dynamic duo of Hans Zimmer and James Newton Howard proclaims the baroque, operatic scope of the entire undertaking. And virtually an attraction by itself, the new Batmobile crashes through barriers and cuts through traffic like the vehicular love child of a Hummer and an Enzo.

Unusual product

All this combines into a most unusual product: a blockbuster action movie with a dark, dramatic heart of a much more personal film.

Relying on shadows and deception, on his own instincts rather than Bat-gadgets, Bale's Batman—and effectively, Nolan's "Batman Begins"—battle for respect and redemption.

The movie's grim, compelling story also hides one audacious twist that will either win over or outright offend Batman purists, but

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Who's Who in Go

For a quick Batman 101, here is a guide to the major characte

Bruce Wayne/The Batman

Who: Scarred by the death of his wealthy parents, Wayne scion Bruce fights a lonely battle against crime behind the mask of The Batman.

Played by: Christian Bale

The young protagonist of "Empire of the Sun" did the action hero gig in "Reign of Fire" and "Equilibrium," but made a name for himself in character-driven films such as "The Machinist" and "American Psycho." The very selective actor accepted this role because: "I liked his obsessive nature, that he was pursuing something he shouldn't be pursuing. I also enjoyed that he was creating different personas. He has an awful lot of inner demons pulling him in different directions."

Rachel Dawes

Who: A by-the-book assistant district attorney who is also a childhood friend of Bruce Wayne. Dawes is a new character in the Batman mythos.

Played by: Katie Holmes

Better known as the brainy, conflicted Joey of TV's "Dawson's Creek," she also appeared in the feature films "Disturbing Behavior," "Wonder Boys" and "Teaching Mrs. Tingle." She says: "I was attracted to the character because of her strength and sense of idealism. I love the relationship between Rachel and Bruce. I loved how she's hard on Bruce and saved Batman. Like a lot of strong people, we feel we can do it on our own and sometimes we need some help from others."

Ra's al Ghul

Who: The mysterious, menacing leader of the League of Shadows, an elite group of warriors who battle injustice. A classic Batman villain who is rumored to be immortal.

Played by: Ken Watanabe

A veteran of Japanese films, Watanabe garnered as Oscar nomination for his portrayal of the honorable warlord Katsumoto in "The Last Samurai." "There is a sequence where I fought with Bruce Wayne and there is an explosion," Watanabe explains in Japanese. "There was supposed to be smoke and ash floating between us, but I just stood and got ash all over me. I thought then that I needed to be good friends with the special effects team so that this movie would work better." He will next be seen in the film adaptation of "Memoirs of a Geisha."

Henri Ducard

Who: Ra's Al Ghul's crafty, enigmatic right hand, Ducard mentors Bruce in the arts of war so that Wayne may later become The Batman.

Played by: Liam Neeson

Best known for his Oscar-nominated role of Oskar Schindler in "Schindler's List," this Irish actor originated the role of Darkman and appeared as the mentor to young warriors in "Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace" and "Kingdom of Heaven. He says of his first encounter with Bale in the costume: "It was the first time I saw him in the Batman gear. He had these little holes in his gloves and he was sweating so much, they were like faucets. He gets my respect for that."

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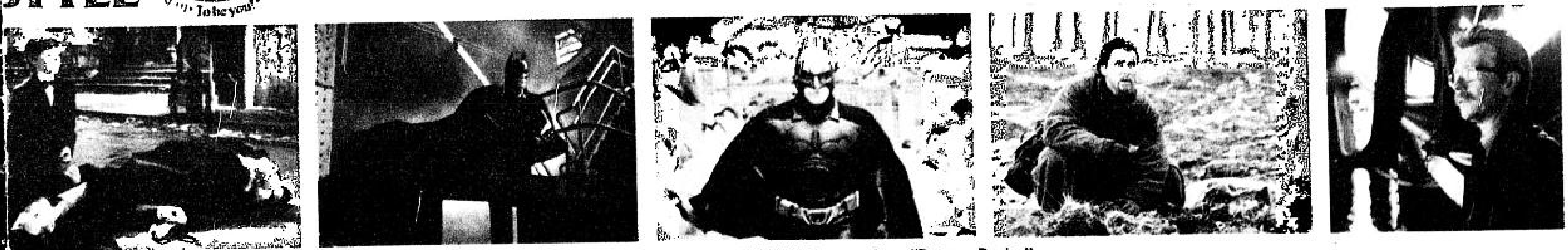

EXCITING scenes from "Batman Begins"

Knight

With its psychological underpinnings and exploration of Bruce Wayne's obscured odyssey, 'Batman Begins' is Nolan's portrait of a modern-day vigilante

twist undoubtedly works, propelling "Bat- Begins" into unexpected, uncharted di- ions.

Vhat the movie seems to be channeling re, for example, is the noir-like atmo- ere of the stylish Batman animated series, nitely a good thing, coupled with produc- designer Nathan Crowley's gothic ham City.

Vith its psychological underpinnings and loration of Bruce Wayne's obscured ssey, "Batman Begins" is Nolan's portrait modern-day vigilante, a righteous man ned with his own darkness yet also at risk n it.

"Batman Begins" believes you need to know why Batman does what he does and how he does it, "The Bat Method Movie."

Yes it has big, loud action scenes and big-name stars. It also has a solid story and a discerning directorial vision. It is, happily, the closest thing to Batman being real as Christopher Nolan successfully reinvents the Dark Knight in "Batman Begins," a sharp, edgy movie that defies convenient category as it spins from the shadows and cuts open movie screens, heralding more welcome darkness to come.

Warner Bros.' "Batman Begins" opens nationwide on June 15.

Win 'Batman Begins' goodies!

2BU! and Warner Bros. are giving away Batman Begins goodies to 10 lucky readers. If you want to join, e-mail your answers to the following questions:

The Batarang is modeled after what well-known Australian hunting stick?

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What part of Batman's suit contains technology that can change shape?

Batman uses what technology to see his opponent's every move in the dark?

What does Bruce Wayne fear most?

Include your name, age, school/office, contact info and send it to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph

tham City

rs in Chris Nolan's 'Batman Begins'

Lucius Fox

Who: A brilliant inventor at Wayne Enterprises, Fox knew the late Wayne couple and provides Bruce with most of his high-tech crime fighting gear.

Played by: Morgan Freeman

Previous appearances: Prior to winning the Oscar for "Million Dollar Baby," Freeman appeared in "Glory," "Driving Miss Daisy," "The Shawshank Redemption" and "Bruce Almighty." His first popular role was that of Easy Reader on TV's "The Electric Company." Why Lucius? "I was never asked to play in any of the major blockbuster movies like 'Spider-Man,' 'Superman' and 'Star Wars.' Alec Guiness said that he made more money in "Star Wars" than any other. So I said, 'this is my shot.'"

Alfred

Who: The Waynes' loyal manservant, Alfred aids Bruce initially as the only one privy to The Batman's secret identity, making him one of the major pillars of Batman continuity.

Played by: Sir Michael Caine

The original "Alfie" has won two Oscars, most recently as Best Actor in a Supporting Role for 2000's "The Cider House Rules." Along the way, he has acted in everything from Woody Allen's "Hannah and Her Sisters" to "Austin Powers in Goldmember." Caine served in the military with the Royal Fusiliers and also ran successful restaurants.

Detective Jim Gordon

Who: An honest cop in the Gotham City Police Department, he believes The Batman is a force for good despite his vigilante status. In the comic book, he is better known after a promotion as Commissioner Gordon, uncle to Barbara Gordon (the original Batgirl, later known as Oracle).

Played by: Gary Oldman

A noted character actor, Oldman played, among others, Dracula in "Bram Stoker's Dracula," Ludwig Van Beethoven in "Immortal Beloved" and Sirius Black in "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban."

Dr. Jonathan Crane/The Scarecrow

Who: The dangerous steward of Arkham Asylum, Crane serves a mysterious patron and uses a chemical gas that causes nightmares. Another staple Batman antagonist.

Played by: Cillian Murphy

Previous appearances: This thespian ran and ran and ran to overnight fame in the arthouse zombie flick "28 Days Later." He also appeared in "Cold Mountain" and "The Girl With a Pearl Earring."

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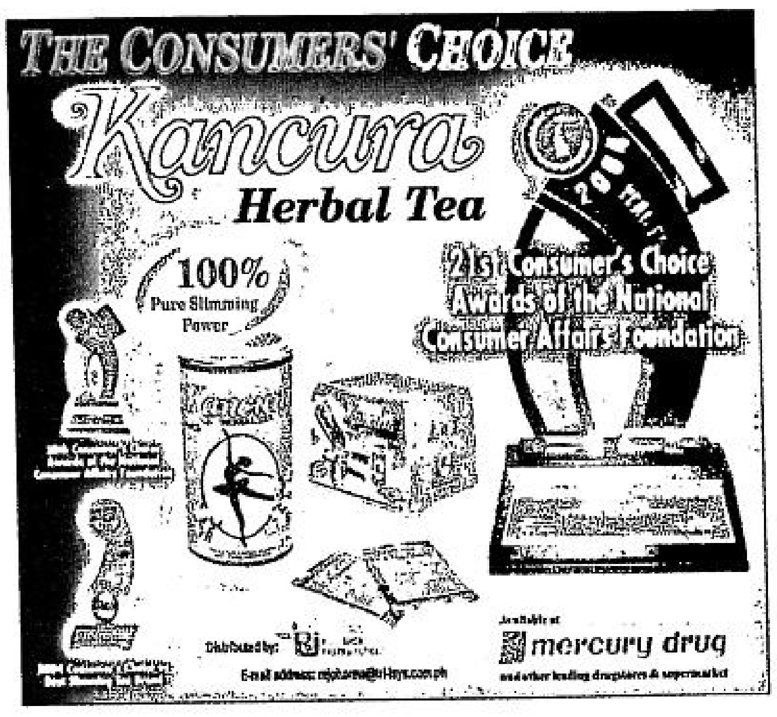
THE CAST of "Batman Begins" in Tokyo

A totally different direction, new equipment and a powerhouse cast make up Christopher Nolan's new Batman movie



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Recharging the Bat

By Ruel S. De Vera

TOKYO—For years, the question was out there, mouthed by hardcore believers and passing fans alike: was The Batman finished as a movie franchise?

CHRISTIAN Bale

KEN Watanabe

KATIE Holmes

Director Tim Burton and actor Michael Keaton won over the naysayers with a decisively unique perspective of Gotham City in 1989's "Batman" and 1992's "Batman Returns" before Joel Schumacher shot down the bat in 1995's "Batman Forever" and 1997's "Batman and Robin."

Yet The Batman remains an extremely popular property, particularly in comic books and on television, as he had since first appearing in "Detective Comics" in 1939.

Unusual choice

The task of reshaping the Bat would fall on a most unusual choice. When Warner Bros. announced the selection of Christopher Nolan, acclaimed for his narrative acrobatics in "Memento," reaction ranged from ecstatic to downright confused. The simple truth was, fans were hopeful but uncertain of what the uncompromising Nolan would bring after having been burned by Bat Credit Cards and visions of Adam West doing the Batusi.

Nolan, who also directed "Insomnia," was more interested in the idea than people thought. "Batman had always been the most interesting character to me because he's human and is driven by complicated and negative things like anger, but he is able to channel it into something good. And that makes him one of the best and most relevant heroes in cinema," he told the assembled press at the Grand Hyatt in Tokyo.

For this reason, he wanted to focus on The Batman's origin. The back-to-the-Batcave movie would be titled "Batman Begins," and Nolan would apply his trademark style as well as a strong yen for character development to Bruce Wayne.

After recruiting his choice comrades in this caped crusade (among them wife Emma Thomas and Charles Roven who served as producers), Nolan went about assembling a cast that not only quieted the critics but raised buzz as well: Christian Bale, Katie Holmes, Michael Caine, Liam Neeson, Morgan Freeman, Gary Oldman, Ken Watanabe and Cillian Murphy.

After beginning principal photography in March 2004, "Batman Begins" would bring the crew to Iceland, London, Cardington and Chicago to capture Bruce Wayne's journey to dark awakening as well as the tortured spires of Gotham City, as seen through the designs of production designer Nathan Crowley. While New York has traditionally been the model for any simulacrum of Gotham, Crowley based his urban landscape on Chicago instead.

While many things about The Batman were changed and updated, many things

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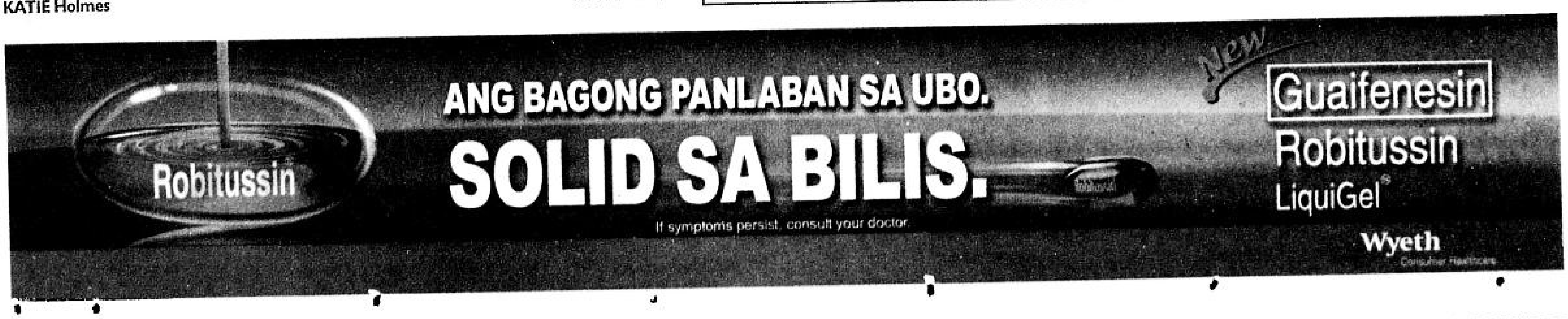

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Recharging the Bat

From page E1

stayed the same. Nolan was quite familiar with the character from his youth, as was Morgan Freeman: "I realized Batman was my favorite hero precisely because he didn't have supernatural abilities. He wouldn't see through walls, he didn't have a magic ring, he couldn't say 'Shazam!' and become Captain Marvel. He was just an ordinary guy outfoxing the bad guys."

Liam Neeson saw a more elemental aspect to Batman: "As a boy growing up in Ireland, Batman was always a little bit scary."

Freeman knew immediately what made The Batman different. That's also what drew a hirsute Christian Bale to the character. "Batman to me was a threatening character, really The Dark Knight, more than anything else. He his incredible darkness and this rage that he has to rein in so he doesn't become what he's fighting."

Authenticity

Aside from having to introduce a whole new Batsuit-courtesy of Lindy Hemming, who won an Oscar for "Topsy-Turvy" and also designed the duds for the recent James Bond films—Nolan brought what he believed to be the needed element in a new Batman movie: authenticity.

"I think what I've never seen is how Bruce Wayne becomes Batman. I've never seen a superhero story told in realistic terms. That to me is interesting. Batman has no superpowers. He just has his own strength and his incredible wealth. He has questionable needs and questionable means as well. This places an incredible responsibility in his hands but an incredible power as well."

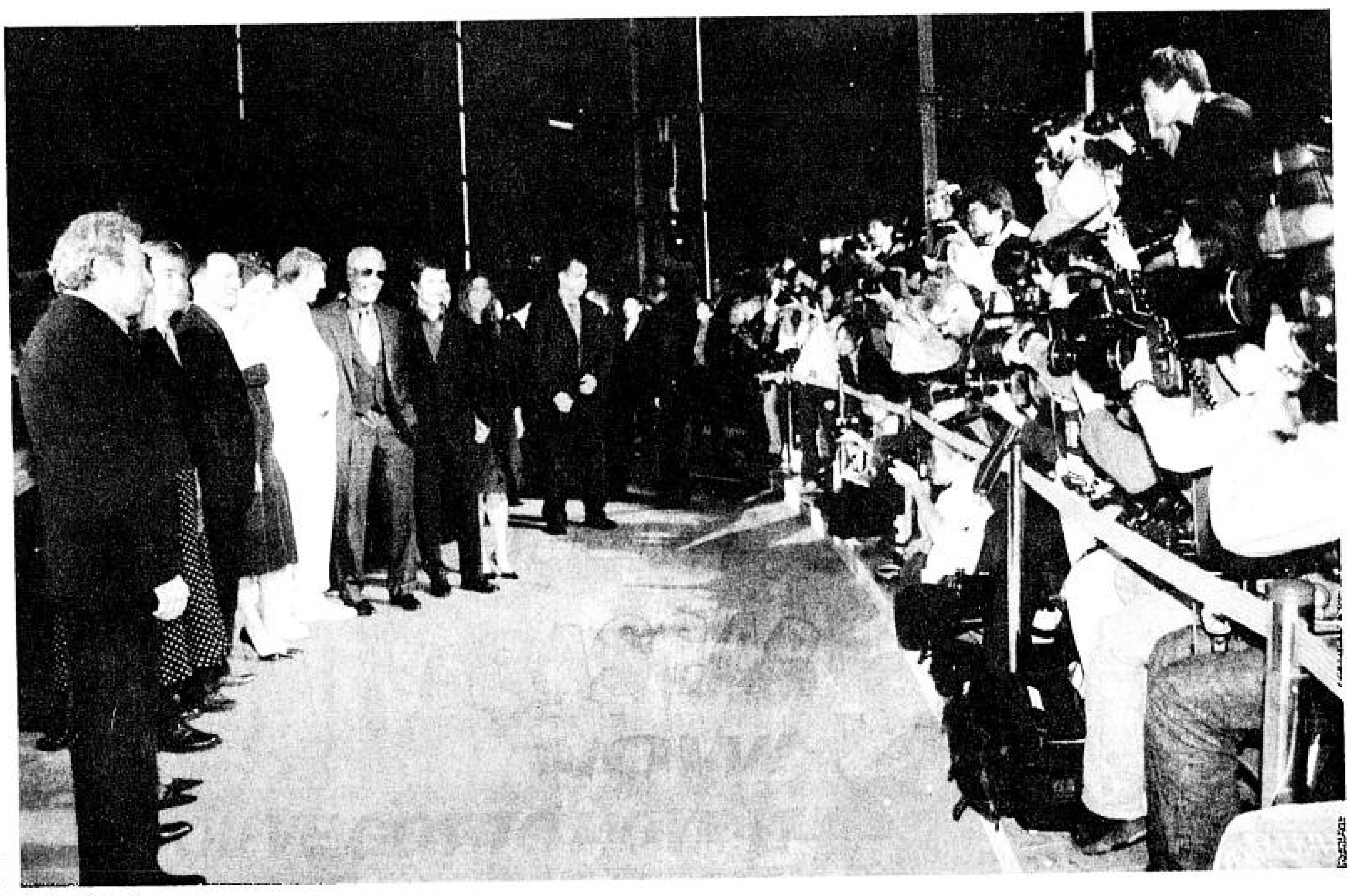
Thus, Nolan concentrated heavily on the fighting skills of The Batman, electing to show the hero reliant more on his ninja-flavored hand-to-hand skills rather than a bewildering array of gadgets and weapons. "The Last Samurai's" fight choreographer David Forman was brought in to work with Bale, and he relied on an evolving fighting style known as the Keysi Fighting Method, which used measured movement and is effective against many simultaneous attacks.

Bale, known for his feats of physical transformation (he lost a shocking 63 pounds for the movie "The Machinist") faithfully and resolutely put himself through all the required exercises to become The Batman. This time, Bale added 20 pounds of solid muscle to become the Dark Knight.

After shoots in front of glaciers as well as well as Chicago's city streets, "Batman Begins" finally went into post-production, but the CGI work, Nolan explains, was really just to fortify the film's realism instead of its fantastic nature.

Throughout, a fun time was had by all. "I had a great time making this film," Holmes told the INQUIRER. "It was wonderful."

As the film prepares to glide its way into theaters, Nolan says "Batman Begins" is a completely different creature than any of the movies that came before.



ON THE red carpet

BALE at the press con

HOLMES (without Tom Cruise)

IN FRONT of the cameras

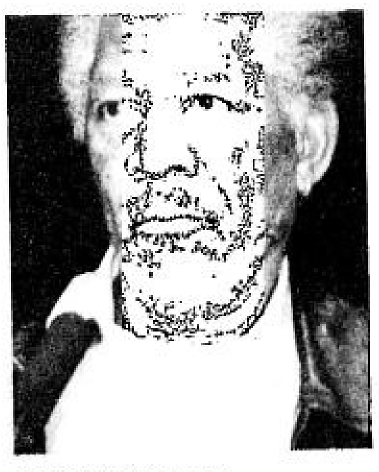
FACING the press

"I think what Tim Burton did was very visionary but also very idiosyncratic. When I saw them, in my mind, it was just another film and just another character," Nolan explains. "I wouldn't have done it that way. I hope this is something fresh and something people hadn't seen before."

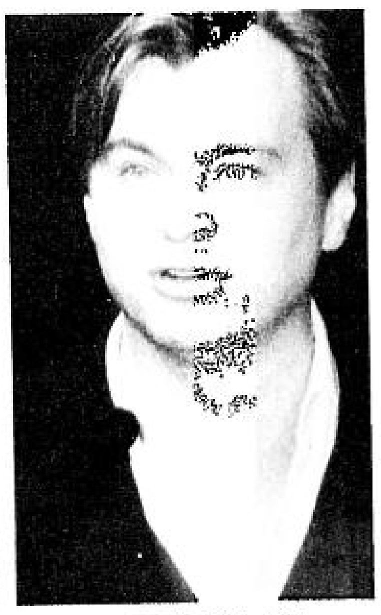
Perhaps the biggest believer in this new direction for the Dark Knight is the Dark Knight himself. "I've never seen it done in a satisfactory way, the way it should be done," Bale says. "I didn't refer to or watch any of the other movies. This is an outstanding movie Chris has made."

LIAM Neeson

WATANABE



MORGAN Freeman



THE DIRECTOR Chris Nolan

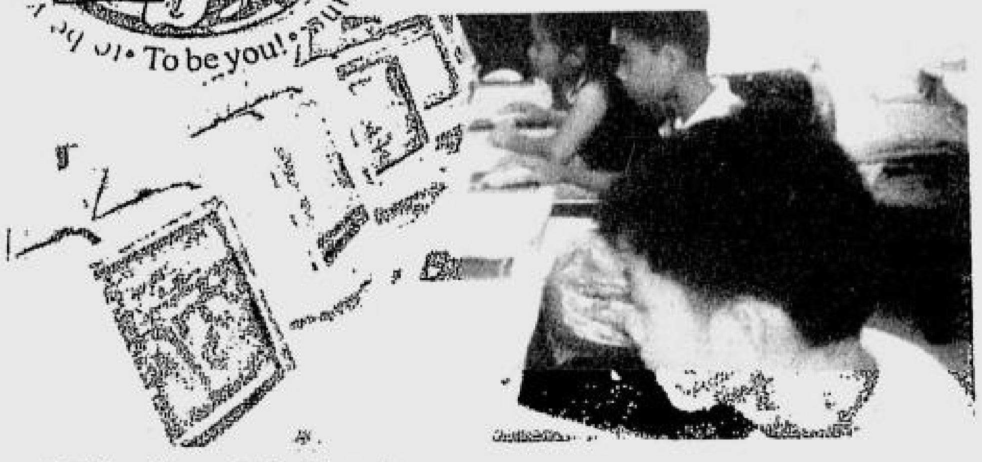
Bat bites

FROM the big press conference to the red carpet, "Batman Begins" brought its own share of fascinating little details to Tokyo.

- To keep himself in character during the long shoot, Christian Bale kept reading three graphic novels: "Batman: Year One," "Batman: The Long Halloween" and "Batman: Dark Victory."
- As far as the Batsuit was concerned, Bale thought he had a pretty good deal: "The suit was much lighter than the previous suits. We adapted a fighting style to the suit which got easier as I got used to it. I liked the changes made to it, bringing it back to basics and making it more practical and not outlandish like the other movies. I thought I had the easiest time of all the actors who wore the costume."
- Katie Holmes coolly fielded questions regarding the rumors that paramour Tom Cruise was thinking of marrying her: "We have to discuss it." On who was the better kisser between Bale and Cruise, Holmes quickly and definitively stated: "I'm in love with Mr. Cruise."
- Morgan Freeman coincidentally celebrated his 47th birthday the day after the world premiere at the Roppongi Hills Arena. He also was one of the two Oscar winners in the cast (the other is Michael Caine) and actually beat castmate Ken Watanabe in last year's Oscar race for best actor in a supporting role.
- Director Chris Nolan says that he believes Batman would win a fight versus Superman: "I'd put my money of Batman, because I think that he'd fight a little dirty."
- The screenplay for "Batman Begins" was penned by David S. Goyer, the comic book scribe ("JSA") who wrote the three Blade movies and directed "Blade: Trinity." He is currently working on a big-screen adaptation of another DC hero, The Flash.
- From one comic star to another: manga legend Go Nagai, the creator of Mazinger Z and Devilman, attended the Tokyo premiere.
- Bruce versus Anakin: "Batman Begins," which will open on the 18th in Japan, actually opens ahead of "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith," which will open in July.
- The Philippines shares the distinction (together with Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand) of being the first countries in the world to screen "Batman Begins" commercially. The movie also opens in the United States on the 15th, but "Batman Begins" will effectively open here hours earlier. *RSDV*

STA. Rosa National High School principal Woodrow Denuyo checking out the computers

Project Gilas is a multi-sectoral initiative that aims to provide Internet access to all the 5,433 public secondary schools in the Philippines



STUDENTS hooking up to the Internet

World Wide Web, here we come!

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

DID you know that less than 40 percent of the country's public high schools have computer laboratories and only 4 percent of these labs are connected to the Internet?

To the rescue comes Project Gilas, an acronym for Gearing up Internet Literacy Access for Students. It is a multi-sectoral initiative that aims to provide Internet access to students and basic Internet literacy programs in all the 5,433 public secondary schools in the Philippines.

The mission is led by a consortium of private corporations and civic organizations in coordination and cooperation with the Department of Education.

Senior high school students in the country's public schools will primarily benefit from the project. Depending on student density and availability of PC workstations, the Internet laboratories may be made available to high school students in lower years as well.

For schools that already have working computer laboratories, Gilas will provide Internet connectivity packages and the basic training necessary for teachers so they can impart Internet literacy skills to their students. For schools that do not have working computer laboratories, Gilas will provide both laboratories and the Internet connectivity packages along with the corresponding basic training. In both cases, unlimited Internet access will be made available for one year.

Government support

The government fully endorses the Gilas initiative, with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Education Secretary Florencio Abad Jr. sitting as honorary chair and vice chair of the Steering Committee.

Sen. Manuel Roxas and Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, vice chair of the Ayala Foundation, will be the working co-chairs of the committee.

CEOs of some of the country's largest and most progressive firms have agreed to serve as members of the Steering Committee. They are Gerardo Ablaza of Globe Telecom, Gil Genio of Innove Communications, TJ Javier of Microsoft and Ricky Banaag of Intel. They will be joined by representatives of several civic, social, multilateral and bilateral development and donor organizations.

Innove, an information and communications solutions company, is one entity actively participating in the project as part of its corporate social responsibility program.

For this year, Innove is providing landline, Internet access and one IP address, all free of charge for the first year. In the second year, schools pay a fixed rate of P1,995 for unlimited broadband Internet access, as Innove works toward a goal of "one country, one rate."

Recently, Innove officers Racquel R. Cagurangan, Josephine Ann A. Ramos and Clinton Horace Selga, along with Globe's Menchie Osial, played hosts to the press who visited Cebu to witness the first-ever Gilas launch in

WORLD/E4

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malapit nang makahinga...

CSI

ON JUNE 9

World Wide Web, here we come!

From page E3

Lapulapu City. Through City Mayor Arturo Radaza's initiative, 17 public high schools were each given 30 computers, peripherals, headsets and generator sets for the island schools.

One of the fortunate schools is the Sta. Rosa National High School in Olango. Thanks to Project Gilas, the school is now more than capable of equipping its students with computer skills that they can use once they pursue a corporate job outside their fishing village.

School Principal Woodrow M. Denuyo is very grateful to the people behind the project for promoting computer literacy. He himself is very much an advocate of information technology. Two years ago he began soliciting resources from alumnae to provide computer sets and a telephone line for the school.

How you can help

Any individual, organization, company or institution can help the project by making cash donations, raising funds or helping mobilize other resources for Gilas.

The approximate cost of Internet connectivity packages per school for a year ranges from P25,000 to P140,000.

The approximate cost of providing 10 units of PCs for schools that do not have PC labs yet is P180,000, exclusive of the infrastructure cost. Donors may choose to sponsor all of or a fraction of the cost of connecting one school, one district, or one province according the donor's capacity to give.

Aside from cash donations, any individual can help by providing technical services in installing Internet connection and training teachers, hardware donations in accordance with the technical guidelines and specifications the Gilas management prescribes, and other forms of logistical support.

Donations in cash or in checks can be sent to the attention of: The Director, Gilas Program Ayala Foundation Inc. 10/F BPI Main Bldg. Ayala Ave. corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. Call 8945620 or 0917-3044527.

BO Bice

More 'American Idol' winners

IT'S OVER. Carrie was crowned and Bo, well, we're still feeling a little sad for Bo. It's been a great season and we can't wait for the next one.

Here is the last batch of winners of 2bU! and Star World's "American Idol" trivia promo.

Winners of Week of May 23, 2005

1. Kristine Franco
2. Nestor Macaraniag
3. Mark Anthony Dungo
4. Corazon T.
5. Sherwin Ochea

* Winners will be notified on how they can claim their prize.

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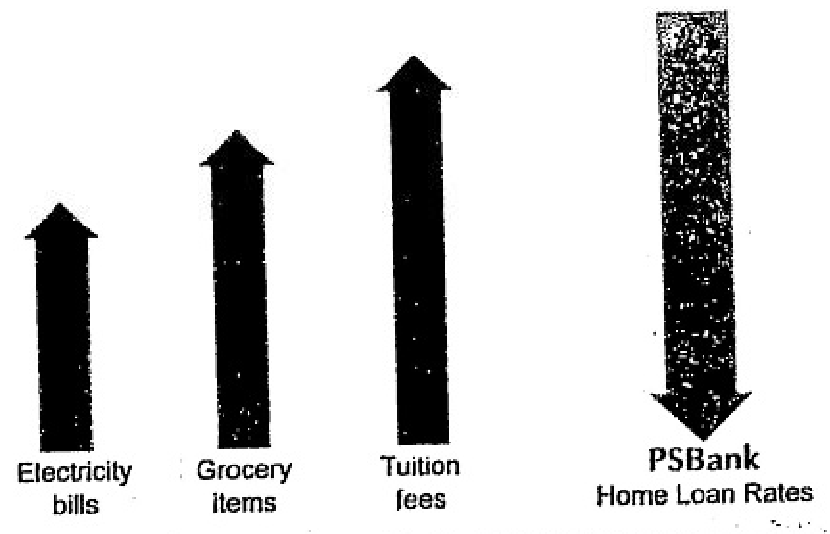

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Hail to Hale!

FROM the garage to Fête De La Musique

Unlike other bands, Hale had a different approach to getting noticed

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

NOT many people know this, but growing up, the band Hale had the need for speed.

"I wanted to be a race car driver growing up," guitarist Roll Martinez said. "I don't know why, but I just wanted to be one." Drummer Omnie Saroca jumped in, "I wanted to be a pilot. Then a doctor, then an architect."

"When I was in preschool, I wanted to be an astronaut!" bassist Sheldon Gellanda said. "But in sixth grade I wanted to be a videogame creator."

It seems that only vocalist Champ Lui Pio had dreams of rock-star grandeur while growing up. "My dad's a musician, so since I was a kid, I was surrounded by music."

Garage band formula

It's such a garage-band cliché how Hale got together. They were all students at the Conservatory of Music of the University of Santo Tomas (UST), and according to Champ, "Roll and Sheldon were classmates, and I was friends with Roll."

They formed the band in July 2004, and cite Radiohead, Switchfoot, and Coldplay as their musical influences.

It sounds like your usual, conventional college band story, but unlike most groups who spend their time playing shady clubs to get noticed (after all, every college band believes the "starving artist" way is the easiest and most credible way to get places), Hale took a different road: they spent time and money on recording a clean demo to submit to record labels. And it paid off.

In November 2004, after shopping their demo around various companies, EMI Philippines picked them up.

"I heard the demo and right away, I called them up to set a meeting," A&R manager Russel Eustaquio said. "There was no way I was going to let a band like that go to another label."

Their lack of presence in the gig circuit made Champ happy with the recognition that their anonymity brought. People would debate on online message boards whether the band was a local act or a foreign group.

According to Champ, a friend told him that a local cover band played one of their songs, and said that it was a song by US Christian rock band Switchfoot. "That was so cool... Switchfoot is one of our influences," Champ said.

It wouldn't be long before people would get to know the faces behind the music. A few months back, they cut their self-titled debut album, which was a crash course of how things work in the music industry.

"At first I didn't know what we were doing," Champ laughed. "But then you just learn as you go along." Roll agreed. "Medyo may pressure, mabilis kasi recording... pero madami kaming natutunan."

Next up was a music video directed by genius Avid Liongoren—"The Day you Said Goodbye" is now on heavy rotation on TV.

Learning the ropes

Hale might be reveling in their success, but they do admit that the many drawbacks to fame get to them sometimes. During the interview, all of them confessed that they were getting a cold, and Sheldon wouldn't let ten minutes go by without sneezing. "Tomorrow is going to be our first day-off in weeks," Roll said. "We're going to sleep in the whole day."

Omnie also shared their first run-in with the politics in the music industry. Their worst gig so far was at a guitar fest, when their set was pushed three hours later. "So many bands kept sneaking into the lineup. We kept getting bumped up. And it sucked because our friends came to see us play at 12 midnight, and they had to stay until 3 a.m. to watch us," Omnie said. "And they had curfews!"

And of course, they hardly have time for themselves anymore. While working on the first album, they would meet twice a week to rehearse and write songs. Now, they're lucky to have a few days to just chill.

But they're also quick to acknowledge the perks they get from working so hard. While Champ said that the privilege to play in front of crowds is a reward in itself, Omnie joked that he loves that they get free food at gigs. "And gas!" Roll laughed. "We come all the way from Parañaque, so free gas is always a good thing!"

And of course, the energy from the crowd fuels them to keep going. "Our best gig was at La Salle Dasma. It was raining and people started going home. It was an against-all-

HAIL/ F3

Tears?

Rica is reborn. Having finally realized what she needs to do for herself, she has resolved to embrace her individuality and personal choices by freeing herself from past relationships and people's expectations. Now, Rica is daring to try things that she likes, learn about ideas that she's passionate about, and simply lead a life with her true happiness in mind. As she opens herself up to this process of finding out what life has in store for her, Rica awaits each discovery with thrilling anticipation.

Giving others the chance to start over, Rica has joined the Tears of Hope, Tears of Health campaign of the Eye Bank Foundation of the Philippines (EBFP), a non-profit humanitarian organization committed to alleviating corneal blindness in Filipinos, and Visine Refresh, a tears substitute. On its tenth year, EBFP keeps the hope of restored sight alive by making corneal transplant surgery accessible to all, and prevents more unnecessary blindness by educating the public on the importance of healthy eyes.

In line with this campaign, each purchase of Visine Refresh will mean a donation to the EBFP in support of its fight against corneal blindness.

You too can help the EBFP by donating cash, or signing on as a cornea or eye donor. Join Rica, Visine Refresh and the Eye Bank Foundation of the Philippines in the Tears of Hope, Tears of Health campaign, and ensure that our fellow Filipinos see a bright future ahead.

For additional information, please call (632) 893.5995
email eyebank1@ultimate.info.com.ph.

Rica Peralejo
Actress

Photography: Jun de Leon

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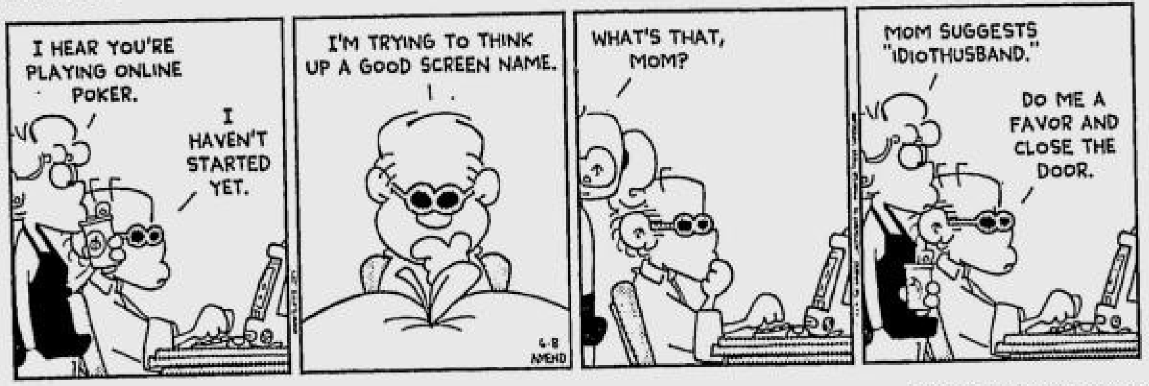
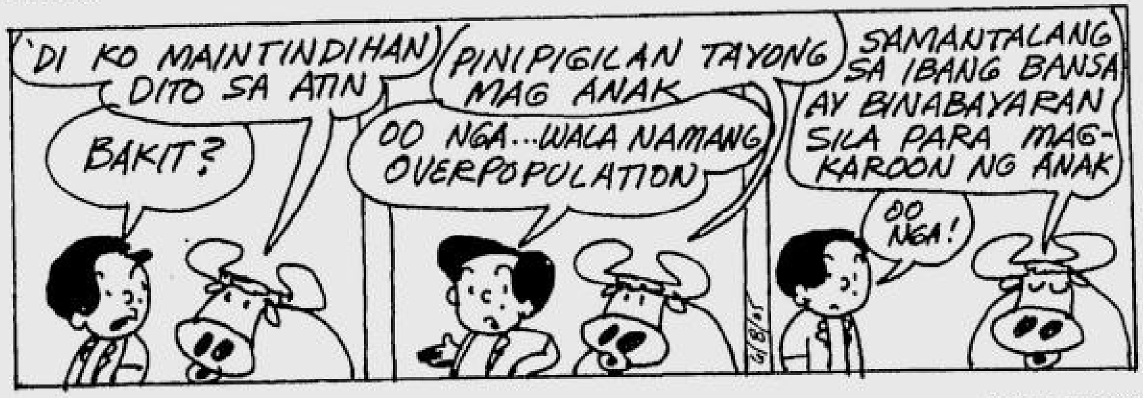
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I HEAR YOU'RE PLAYING ONLINE POKER.
I HAVEN'T STARTED YET.
I'M TRYING TO THINK UP A GOOD SCREEN NAME.
6-8 AMEND
WHAT'S THAT, MOM?
MOM SUGGESTS "IDIOTHUSBAND."
DO ME A FAVOR AND CLOSE THE DOOR.

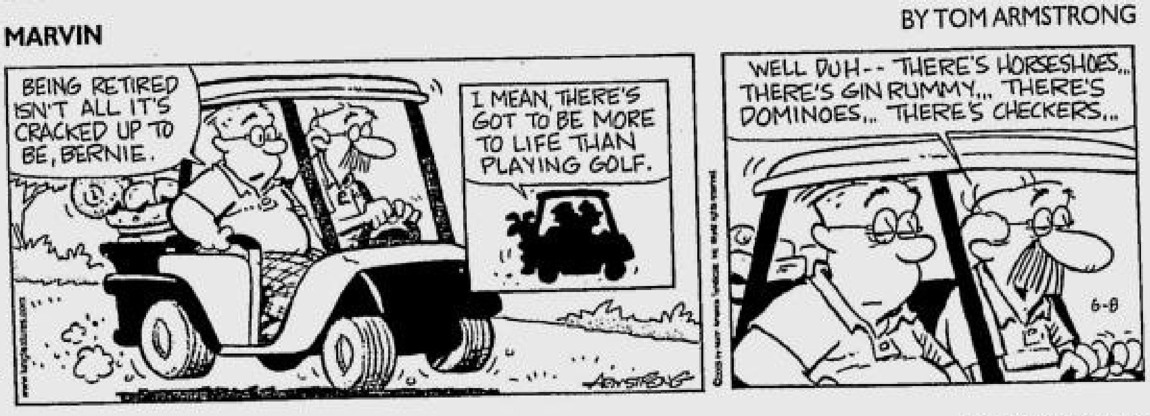
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


'DI KO MAINTINDIHAN DITO SA ATIN
BAKIT?
PINIPIGILAN TAYONG MAG ANAK
OO NGA...WALA NAMANG OVERPOPULATION
SAMANTALANG SA IBANG BANSA AY BINABAYARAN SILA PARA MAG-KAROON NG ANAK
OO NGA!

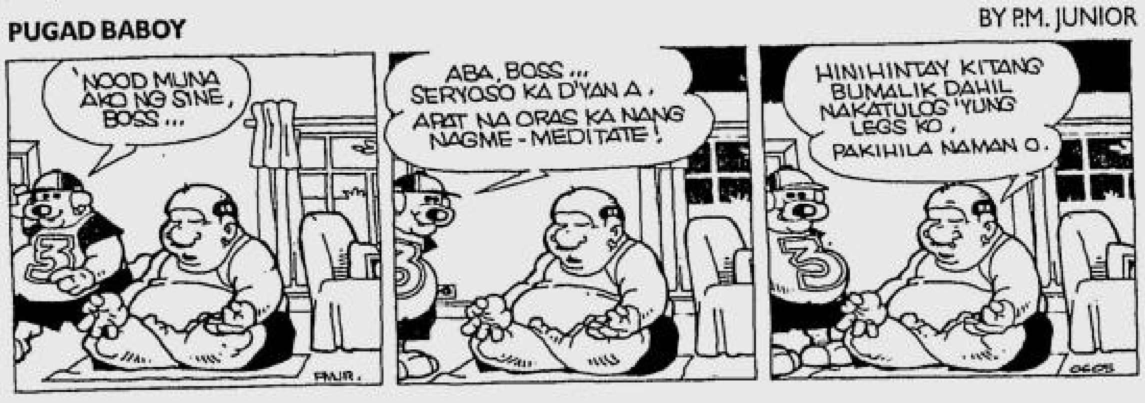
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BEING RETIRED ISN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE, BERNIE.
I MEAN, THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE TO LIFE THAN PLAYING GOLF.
WELL DUH-- THERE'S HORSESHOES... THERE'S GIN RUMMY... THERE'S DOMINOES... THERE'S CHECKERS...
6-8

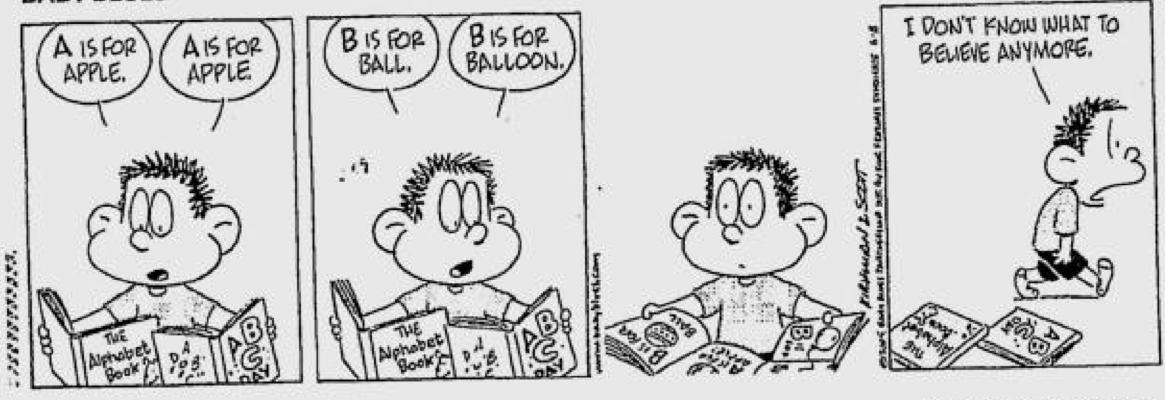
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


'NOOD MUNA AKO NG SINE, BOSS ...
ABA, BOSS ... SERYOSO KA D'YAN A. ARAT NA ORAS KA NANG NAGME-MEDITATE!
HINIHINTAY KITANG BUMALIK DAHIL NAKATULOG 'YUNG LEGS KO, PAKIHILA NAMAN O.

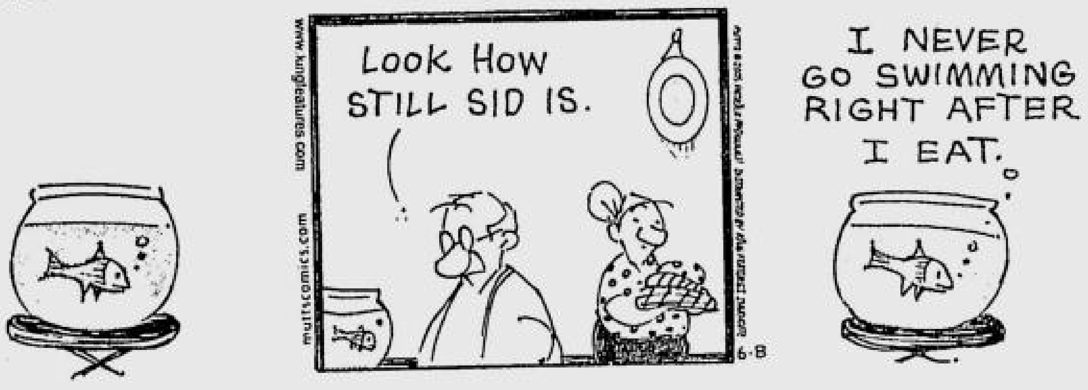
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


A IS FOR APPLE.
A IS FOR APPLE.
B IS FOR BALL.
B IS FOR BALLOON.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE ANYMORE.

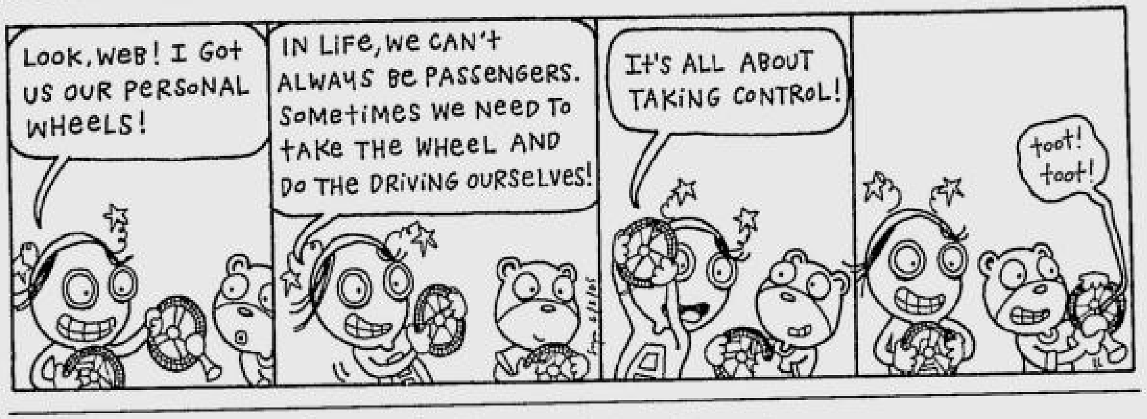
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


LOOK HOW STILL SID IS.
I NEVER GO SWIMMING RIGHT AFTER I EAT.
6-8

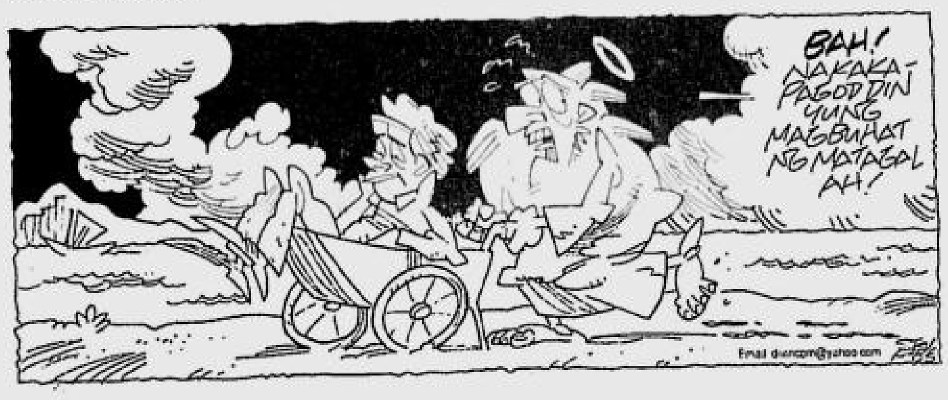
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


LOOK, WEB! I GOT US OUR PERSONAL WHEELS!
IN LIFE, WE CAN'T ALWAYS BE PASSENGERS. SOMETIMES WE NEED TO TAKE THE WHEEL AND DO THE DRIVING OURSELVES!
IT'S ALL ABOUT TAKING CONTROL!
toot! toot!

DIVINE COMEDY

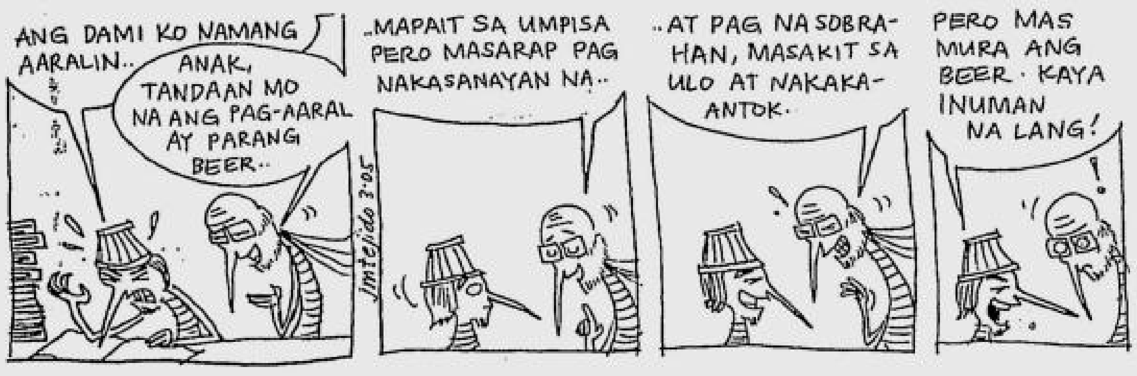
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


BAH! NAKAKA-PAGOD DIN YUNG MAGBUHAT NG MATAGAL AH!
Email divincom@yahoo.com

ISA PANG VERSION NG FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG DAMI KO NAMANG AARALIN..
ANAK, TANDAAN MO NA ANG PAG-AARAL AY PARANG BEER..
..MAPAIT SA UMPISA PERO MASARAP PAG NAKASANAYAN NA..
..AT PAG NA SOBRA-HAN, MASAKIT SA ULO AT NAKAKA-ANTOK.
PERO MAS MURA ANG BEER. KAYA INUMAN NA LANG!
jmtejido 3.05

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Duty is important to you. You're a family leader, and you take your responsibilities seriously. You are capable of mastering many skills and are often technically proficient in your field. You're highly individualistic. You need peaceful, low-stress surroundings. The year ahead holds important choices for you. Choose wisely. Birthdate of: Frank Lloyd Wright, innovative architect; Julianna Margulies, actress; Barbara Bush, former US first lady.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Home, family, real estate and domestic issues are your focus today. Discussions with parents are significant. Putter around home as much as you can.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Discussions with siblings are important today. A short trip somewhere might please you. This is a good day for negotiations, and for wheeling and dealing.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might want to shop for family today, or for female friends or for your home. You're concerned with your cash flow. You want to do something to feel more secure.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The Moon is in your sign today, bringing you a little bit of good luck. You might also feel a bit more emotional than usual. (And that's saying a lot.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Try to get a bit of solitude or some peace, and quiet today. You need some time by yourself to pull your act together. You can't be all things to everyone all the time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Conversation with a female friend could be significant today. Perhaps someone needs to confide in you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Whether you intend this or not, you will likely draw attention to yourself today. Knowing this ahead of time, you might want to give thought to how you appear to others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have a strong urge to get away from it all or do something different today. You can satisfy this feeling to some degree if you have a chance to learn something new.

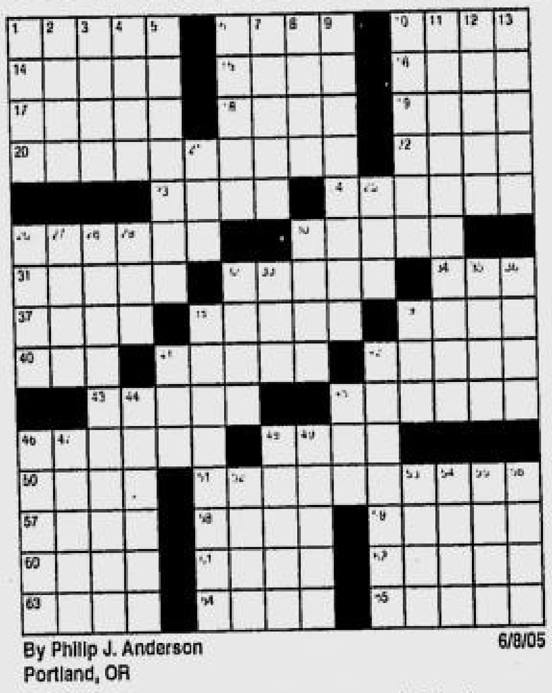
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You want to do something today that makes you feel more secure about your possessions or how you share things with others. Don't hesitate to speak up to defend your interests.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Today's Moon is opposite your sign. This promotes important discussions with those who are closest to you. You find it easy to empathize with others, and to see their points of view.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): It's hard to make your mind up about something at work today. If you're not sure what to do, then do nothing. Just don't act.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a playful, flirtatious day! You want to have a little fun. Of course you're prepared to work, but you want your deserving cookie at the end.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

6/8/05

ACROSS
1 Barack of Illinois
6 Dateless guy
10 Toll
14 French legislature
15 Asian mountain goat
16 Poker payment
17 Smallest possible
18 Zeno's home
19 Headliner
20 Campaigning
22 Watery
23 Bulk
24 Hunt and Reddy
26 Punctual
30 Muscular power
31 Charged
32 Bards
34 TV spots
37 Chooses
38 Weasellike mammal
39 Fever and shivers
40 Cinder
41 Pesto herb
42 Hag
43 TV movie critic
45 Reverse dive
46 Stood up to
48 Watch winder
50 One of the Waughs
51 Sailing
57 Informer
58 Writer Ephron
59 Spooky
60 Turn toward
61 Karamazov brother
62 Rope on the range
63 Belgian battle site
64 Horn or Hatteras
65 Scornful look

DOWN
1 European capital
2 Has-__
3 Henry Gray subj.
4 Alda TV series
5 Endeavor
6 Editorial directives
7 Ankle
8 Uh...pardon me
9 Pencil fill
10 Fortified residence
11 Teetotaling
12 Blot
13 Sea swallows
21 Took seats
25 USNA grad
26 Malayan outrigger
27 Little blows
28 Waffling
29 More in Mexico
30 Exchange for money
32 Olden days
33 Kyoto sash
35 Sandy hill
36 Clairvoyant
38 Cynically mocking
39 Onassis, to pals
41 Buzzer
42 Slightly arched surfaces
44 Squabble
45 Holy smokes!
46 Duck of cartoons
47 Inventor Howe
48 Standee's handgrip
49 Scottish lord
52 __ Scotia
53 Restraining influence
54 "Dies __" (day of wrath)
55 Time of Nick?
56 Separation of birthdays

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

L	A	N	C	E	■	I	G	O	R	■	G	I	L	A
O	N	I	O	N	■	T	U	N	E	■	E	C	O	L
C	O	C	O	C	H	A	N	E	L	■	R	E	S	T
O	N	O	■	■	E	L	S	■	■	A	B	A	S	E
■	■	T	O	M	M	Y	H	I	L	F	I	G	E	R
A	B	I	D	E	S	■	O	D	O	R	L	E	S	S
M	I	N	E	O	■	E	T	A	L	■	■	■	■	■
B	O	E	R	W	A	R	■	H	A	T	E	F	U	L
■	■	■	■	■	L	A	L	O	■	A	R	I	S	E
A	L	L	O	C	A	T	E	■	E	M	I	L	E	S
G	I	O	R	G	I	O	A	R	M	A	N	I	■	■
A	L	O	E	S	■	■	R	O	M	■	■	G	P	A
T	I	K	I	■	D	O	N	N	A	K	A	R	A	N
H	E	A	D	■	O	B	O	E	■	I	N	E	R	T
A	S	T	A	■	W	I	F	E	■	T	I	E	R	S

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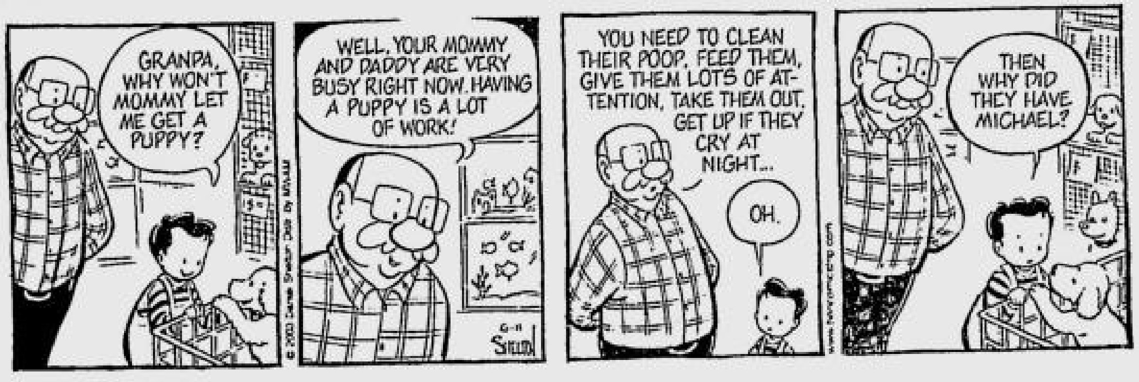
6/8/05

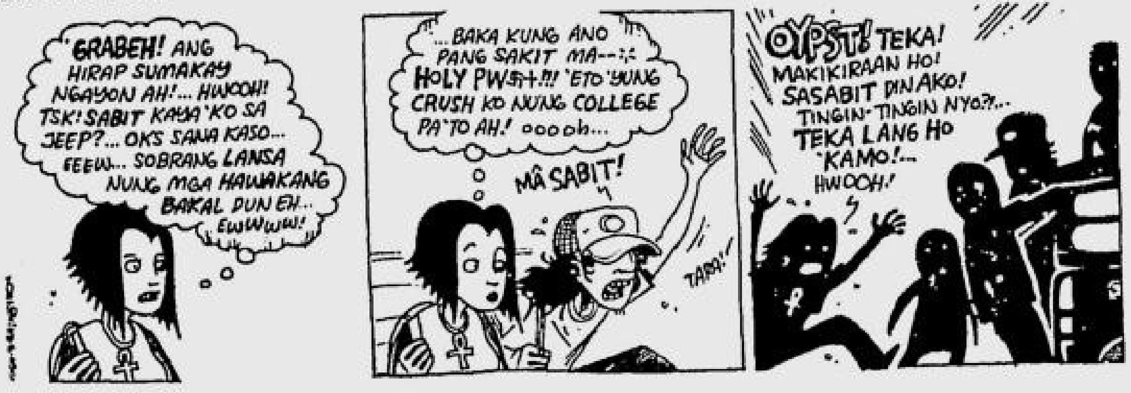
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GRANPA, WHY WON'T MOMMY LET ME GET A PUPPY?
WELL, YOUR MOMMY AND DADDY ARE VERY BUSY RIGHT NOW. HAVING A PUPPY IS A LOT OF WORK!
YOU NEED TO CLEAN THEIR POOP, FEED THEM, GIVE THEM LOTS OF ATTENTION, TAKE THEM OUT, GET UP IF THEY CRY AT NIGHT...
OH.
THEN WHY DID THEY HAVE MICHAEL?

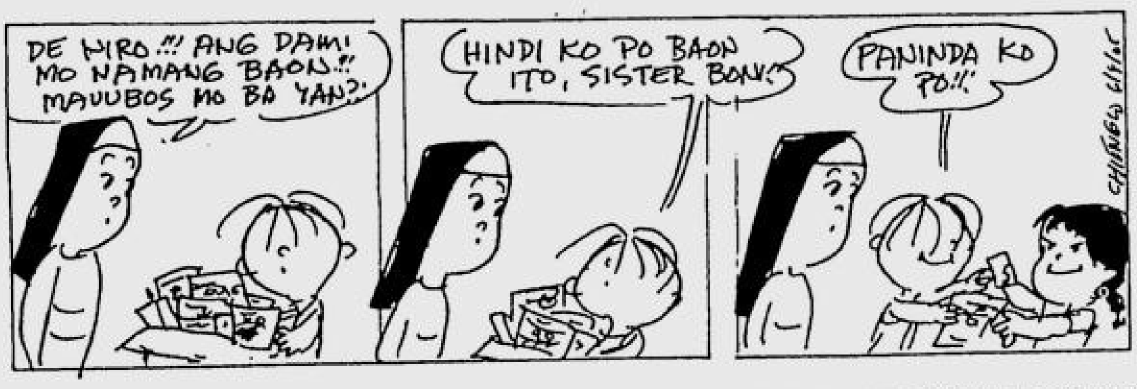
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


'GRABEH! ANG HIRAP SUMAKAY NGAYON AH!... HWOOH! TSK! SABIT KAYA 'KO SA JEEP?... OKS SANA KASO... EEEW... SOBRANG LANSA NUNG MGA HAWAKANG BAKAL DUN EH... EWWWW!
...BAKA KUNG ANO PANG SAKIT MA--
HOLY PW$#!!! 'ETO 'YUNG CRUSH KO NUNG COLLEGE PA 'TO AH! oooh...
MÂ SABIT!
TARA!
OYPST! TEKA! MAKIKIRAAN HO! SASABIT DIN AKO! TINGIN-TINGIN NYO?!.. TEKA LANG HO 'KAMO!... HWOOH!

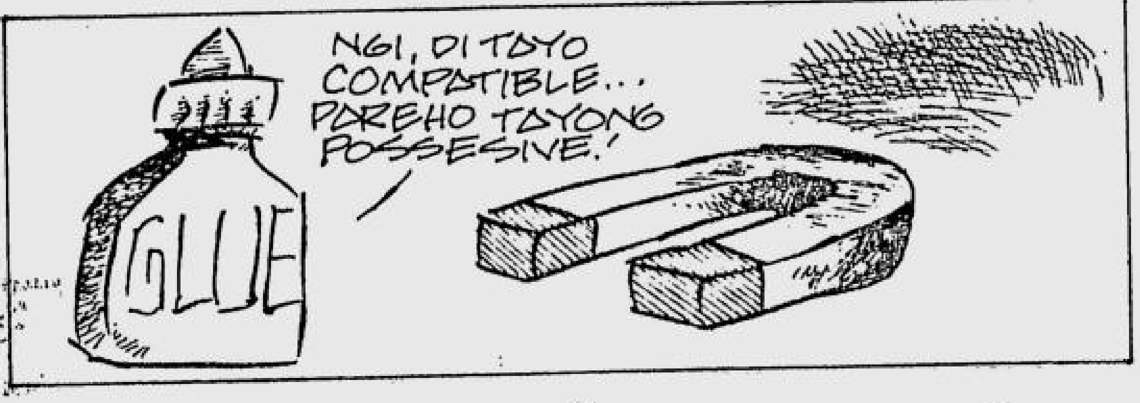
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO...!! ANG DAMI MO NAMANG BAON...!! MAUUBOS MO BA YAN?!
HINDI KO PO BAON ITO, SISTER BON!
PANINDA KO PO!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NGI, DI TAYO COMPATIBLE... PAREHO TAYONG POSSESIVE!
GLUE

Behind the music

SINCE all four of them penned the songs on their album, we asked Hale their top five fave tracks. "Most of our songs are from our experiences," Champ said. Makes you want to read between the lines of their lyrics…

1. "Take No"

Roll Martinez (RM): It has a sentimental value, because it's the first song we wrote. It's about a break-up *na sobrang* overdue na. You suck it up with that person *para pag-break ninyo*, the relationship will be totally dead, and you'll really feel free.

2. "Blue Sky"

Omnie Saroca (OS): It's a positive song.

Champ Pio: The lyrics are uplifting, compared to the rest of the songs. *'Pag dumating na yung* point *na sobrang* down *ka na*, there's no other place to go but up.

3. "Here Tonight"

OS: It's still about love. And it's fun to play this song live. So it's love and live.

4. "Bent Down"

RM: *Para sa akin* it's the most personal. I intentionally mixed up the lyrics, because I don't want people to understand it.

5. "Life Support"

Sheldon Gellanda: This song talks about self-denial in the first-, second-, and third-person point of view. And they're all talking about someone else, then *isang tao lang pala silang lahat*. So it's about self-denial.

Hail to Hale!

From page F1

odds gig!" Omnie said.

Sheldon piped in: "And through that gig… *nagbunga ang aming pagtugtog*." Obviously an inside joke, as the whole band burst into laughter at Sheldon's comment. "There was… shall we say, personal progress at that gig," he laughed.

Bright future

It's hard to disregard how fast Hale got into the spotlight. And it's only right that they strike while the iron is hot.

Up next for the band is a mall tour. And of course, their stint on the Alternative stage at the Fête de la Musique on June 18, which they're really giddy about.

"*Ako dati* every year, *inaabangan ko talaga 'yung* Fête," Sheldon said. "I was introduced to it by a friend… and *magaling siya*, because in one night, *lahat* ng musicians from different genres play. *Walang sapawan*. It's a night for everyone."

"*Puwede kang pumili sino papanuorin mo*," Omnie said.

Sheldon went on: "The event caters to everyone, from A-Z." he then stopped. "Oh no wait, *wala palang* Sex Bomb dancers *doon*."

The band broke into laughter again, but they were obviously tired.

Champ was excited about his plan to sleep all day, and Roll was anticipating the hour-long drive home. And then, in three days, they would rock the stage at Mayric's and jump into a whirlwind schedule of gigs.

With such professional work ethic and hunger to succeed, the band has definitely quenched their thirst for speed.

Catch Hale on the Alternative Stage in front of the Podium on June 18.

WIN A DATE WITH HALE!

HERE'S a chance to quit stalking Hale. if you're a true blue Hale fan and would like to get up close and personal (not that up close and person—we're a PG13 Lifestyle section!) with the band, you might want to join our contest to win a date with the band on the night of Fête de la Musique. The awesome guys at UCC Coffee of The Podium agreed to treat you and a friend, as well as the band, to a dinner at their fab café on June 18. If you're done screaming and jumping up and down while reading this, send in a 12-line original poem about the group to winadatewithhale@yahoo.com, on or before 12 noon on June 13.

THE FASHION FREAKS

Bag to school

SURE, there are about a gazillion and one backpacks available in the market today. But choosing the right bag for school shouldn't just depend on your favorite color and budget. In these health-conscious times, you have to pick a bag that wouldn't be a burden on your body.

Enter the Air Conticontac Posturepedic Backpack.

This backpack, which is set to receive the Philippine Marketing Excellence Award in July, is the first schoolbag with a webframe that evenly distributes weight along the lower back. That means you won't suffer long-term injury resulting from unbalanced loads, a normal occurrence with ordinary backpacks.

The webframe is made of lightweight material, so the bag doesn't add to the weight of your load. The Air Conticontac has an ultra-ventilation technology, allowing air to flow freely along the back, minimizing heat and perspiration levels.

This bag can also enhance your posture, ridding the body of aches and pains caused by stooping from weighty, non-support bags.

If you want your own Air Conticontac Posturepedic Backpack, e-mail us your name, age, school, contact info and tell us why you deserve to win the bag. Be as creative as you want. E-mail your entries to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph.

Blazing Products' Air Conticontac Posturepedic Backpacks are available at all Storeshop branches. Call 6354733, 8922216 or 8503769.

Watch out for more back-to-school tips and fashion finds next week!

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Great handy options

> While some things are better left on your wish list, you can always go for the next best thing—and get spectacular results just the same

Lora Gabol

THERE are two major milestones in every person's road to maturity. First, the day we take off our rose-colored glasses and see that really, we can't have it all. More free time, a stress-free existence, a better body, clearer skin—there will always be more to want, but somehow, always less than this amount to be achieved.

But then there's the moment you realize that while some things are better left on your wish list, you can also always go for the next best thing—and get spectacular results just the same.

Frizz-free hair

For instance, your hair frizzes up sometimes, and doesn't always cooperate with your styling preference. So what? Post-shower, apply a dollop of Tigi Bedhead After Party on damp locks, air or blow-dry, then follow up with Tigi Bedhead Girltoys Shine Serum for a frizz-free finish with knockout shine. And just for the record, Tigi's line of hair care and styling prods top my yummy-smelling list.

Flawless legs

Did your tomboy roots leave the evidence on your legs? Or did you hide out this summer and need an instant tan? Sally Hansen Airbrush Legs is the ultimate must-have for gals who have less-than-perfect stems—about 99 percent of the female population, I should add. So load up on these canisters of smudge-proof body makeup that disguises varicose veins, scars and bruises. A big bonus? The velvety result makes legs look longer and slimmer, too.

Toned figure

Want a to-die-for figure without slaving off at the gym? Well, take a shortcut and allow Mother Nature's gifts work on those contours. Shiseido Body Creator Aromatic Salt Scrub is a fragrant bath buddy that helps dissolve stubborn cellulite, while the Body Firming Cream in the same line tones the skin for a tighter, more svelte silhouette. You'd have to lay off the junk food, though.

Clean face

You don't need layers of makeup to conceal blemishes and smoothen out your complexion. Try this tandem: Bobbi Brown Oil-Free Foundation comes in an easy-to-blend formulation that disappears onto skin, and goes on natural with yellow-based shades perfect for Asian skin.

Bobbi Brown Concealer-To-Go is all you need to disguise those dark circles and imperfections, and the teensy-weensy packaging is perfect for toting around for touch-ups anytime, anywhere.

And while saving up for those pricey derma appointments, take matters into your own hands (and I don't mean pricking!) by switching to products that are gentle on skin but tough on breakouts. The L'Oreal Pure Zone range packs in just enough salicylic acid to battle acne and blemishes, but doesn't damage or "burn" surrounding skin. I especially like their moisturizer, which acts like a mattifier as well.

Sultry lips

Forget collagen injections on your kisser. The key to looking subtly sexy is having a full, supple pout. Whoever thought you can get it from a lip gloss? Try Du Wop Lip Venom, a tingly clear gloss that plumps up lips upon application. It's deliciously spicy, and the sensation on your smoocher is enough to make you feel sexy. An absolute must for that hot date.

L'Oreal and Sally Hansen at PCX and other health and beauty stores; Shiseido at Rustan's and My Beauty Hub at 6750 Ayala Avenue Makati; TIGI Bedhead at select salons; Bobbi Brown at Rustan's Tower and Rustan's Makati; Du Wop at Beauty Bar, Rockwell Power Plant and Glorietta 3.

E-mail the author at lora_gahol@yahoo.com or lora_gahol@pldtvibe.net

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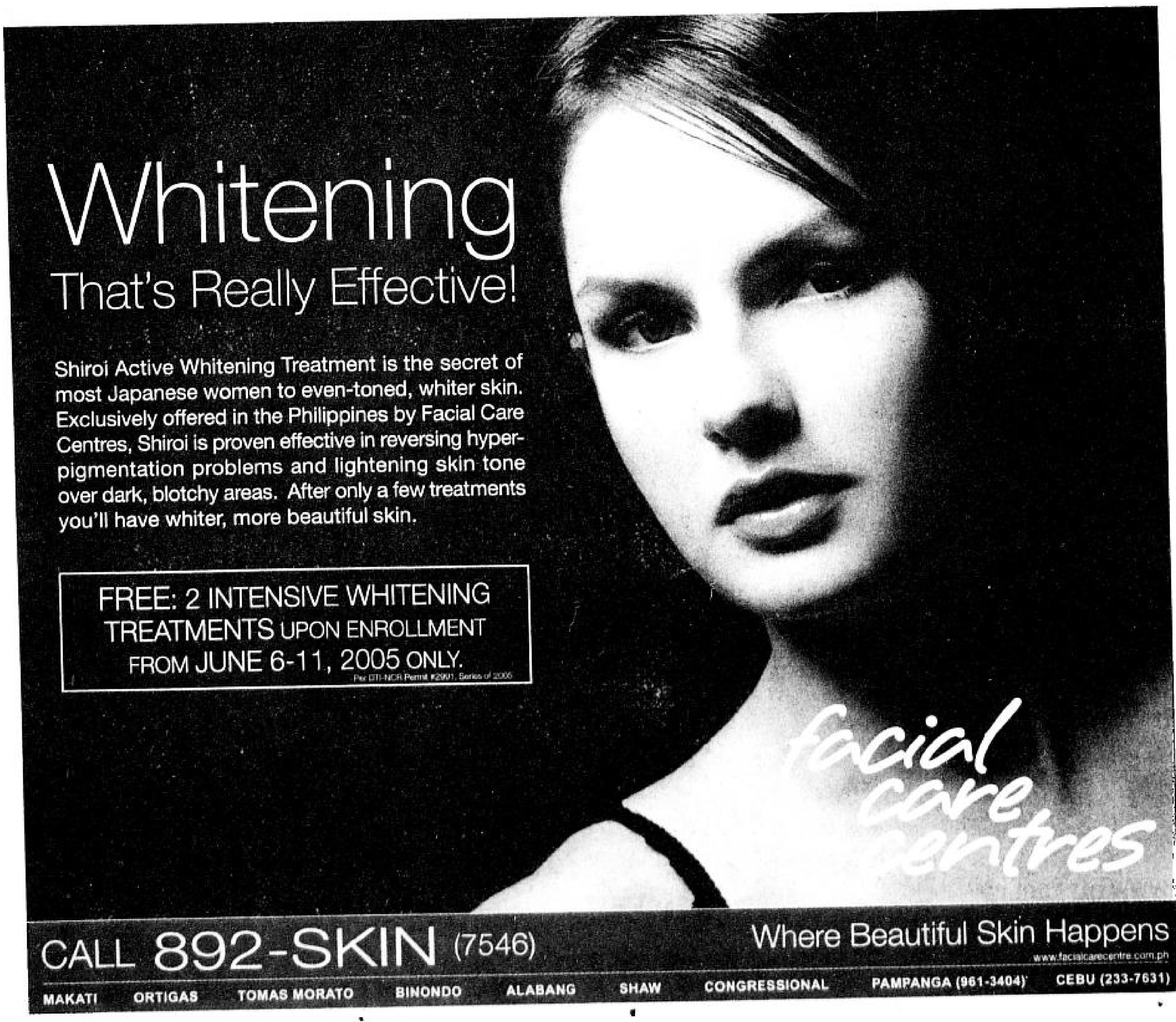
Per DTI-NCR Permit No.1032, Series of 2005.



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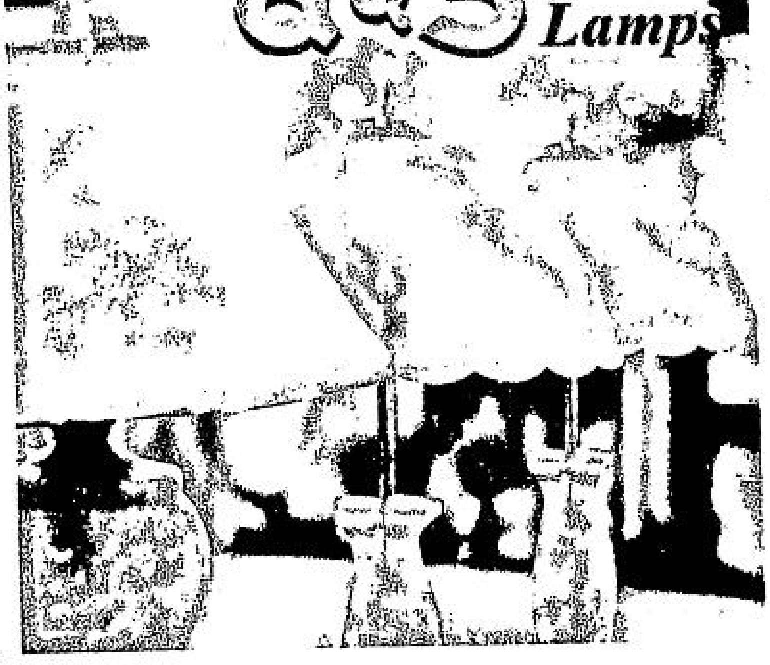

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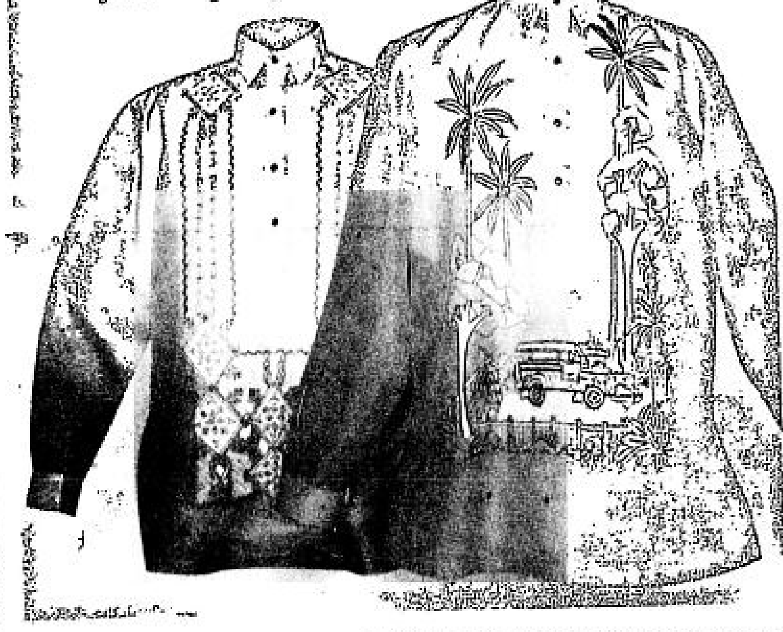

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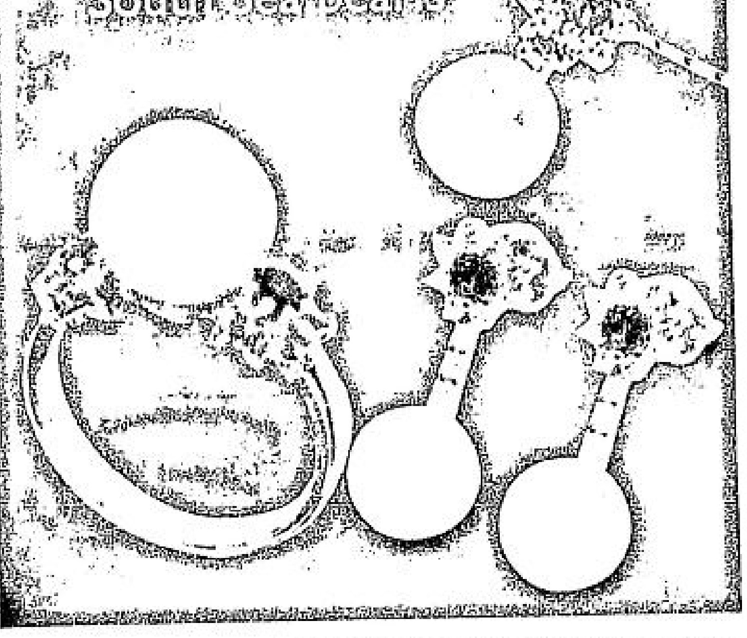

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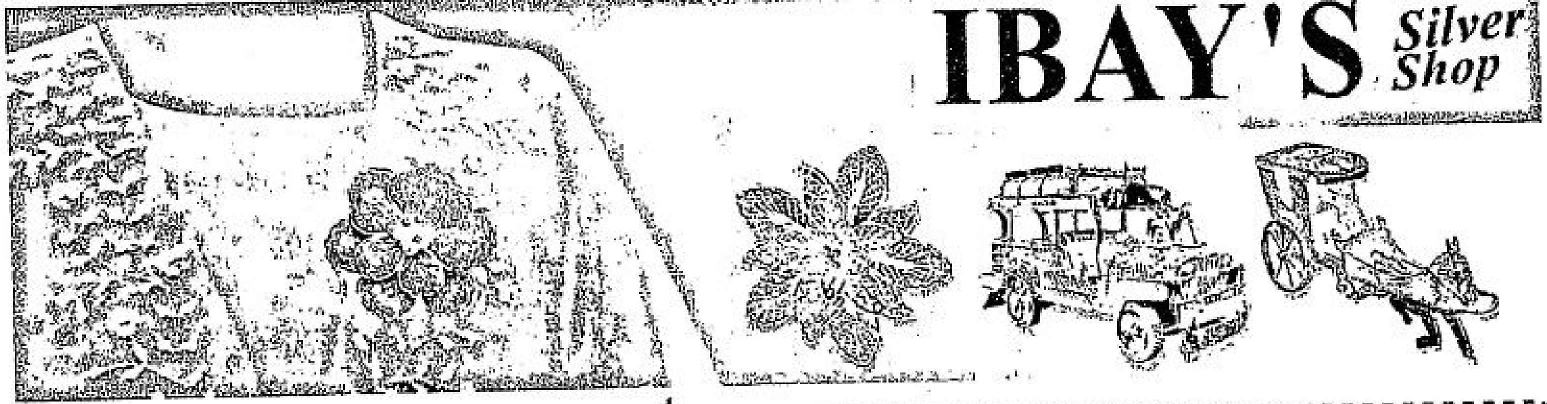

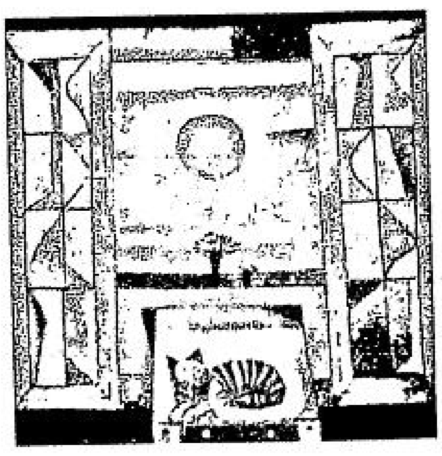

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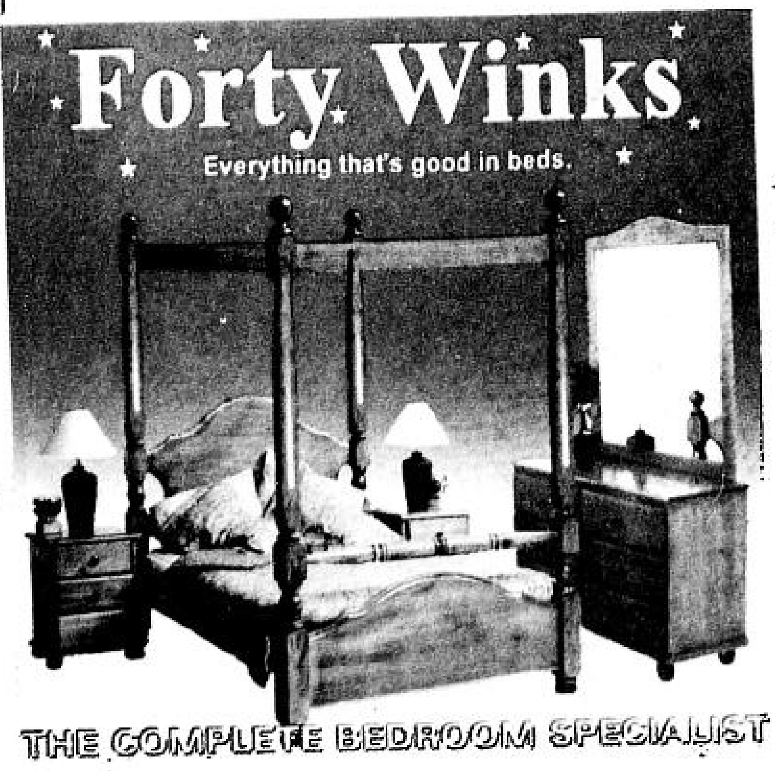

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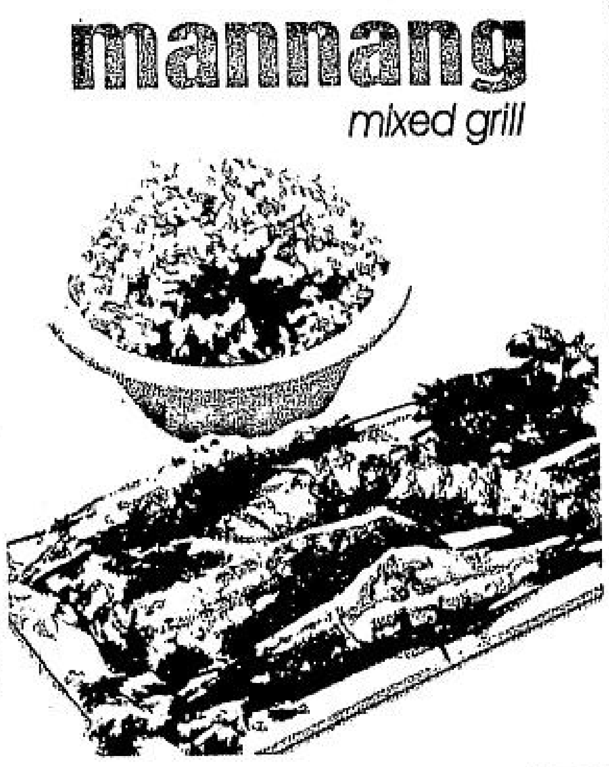
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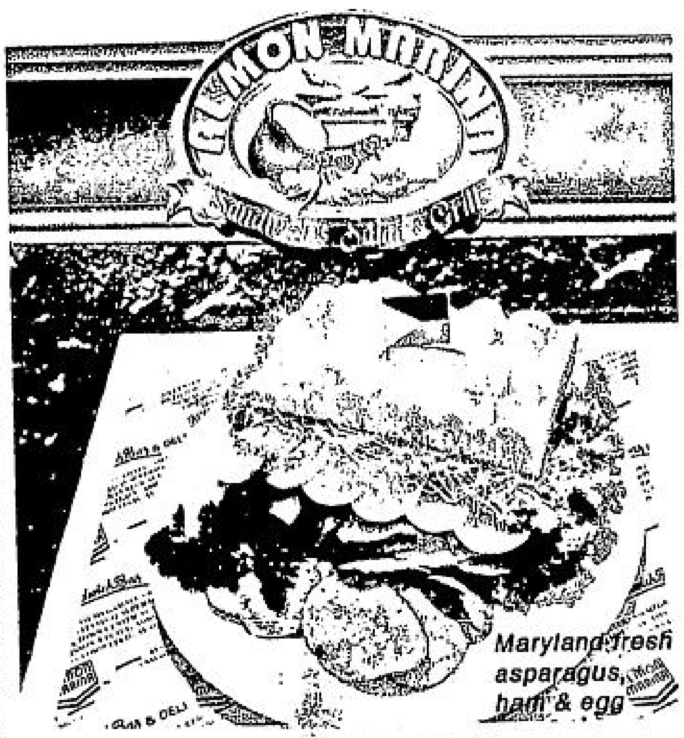
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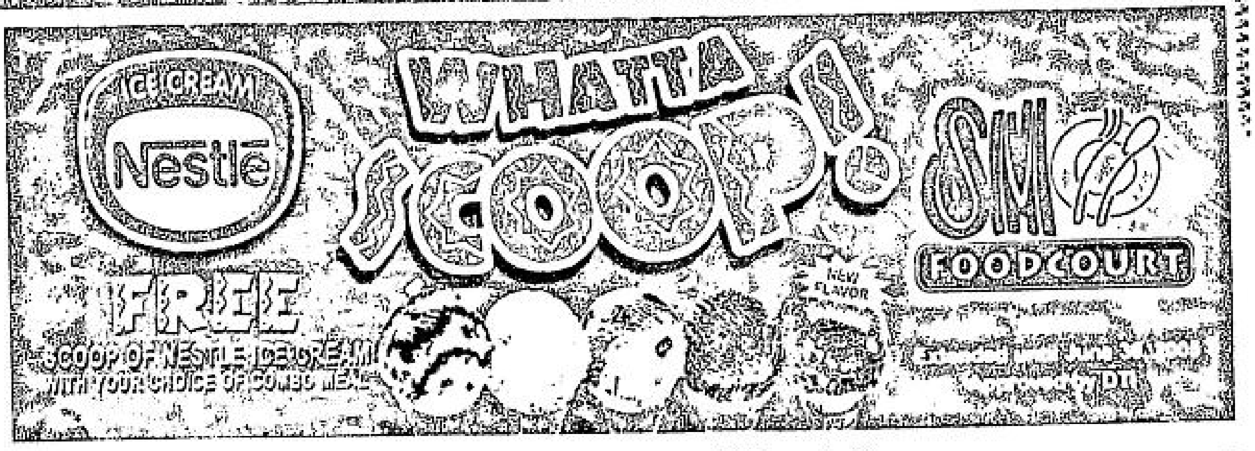
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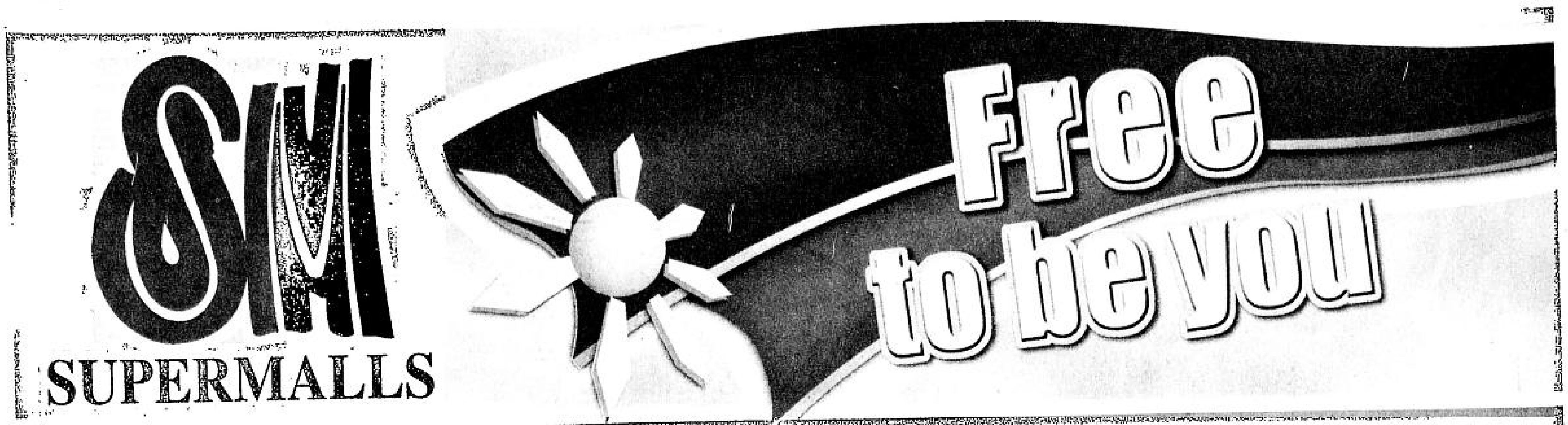
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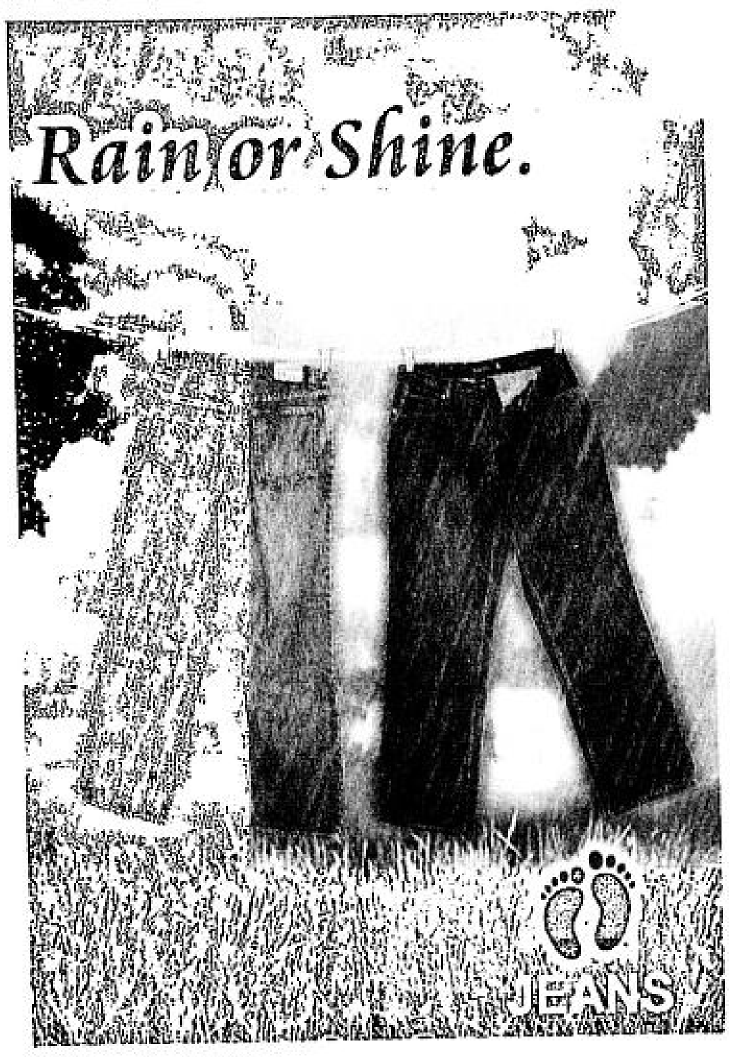
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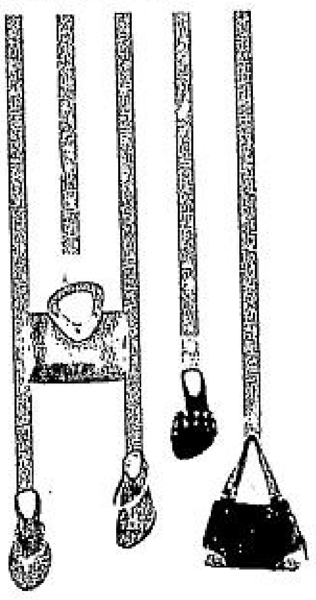
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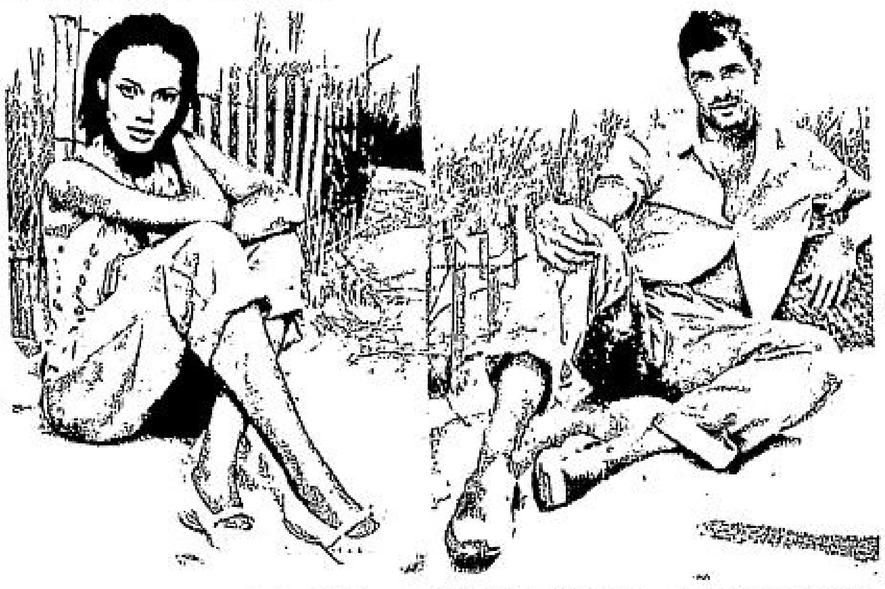

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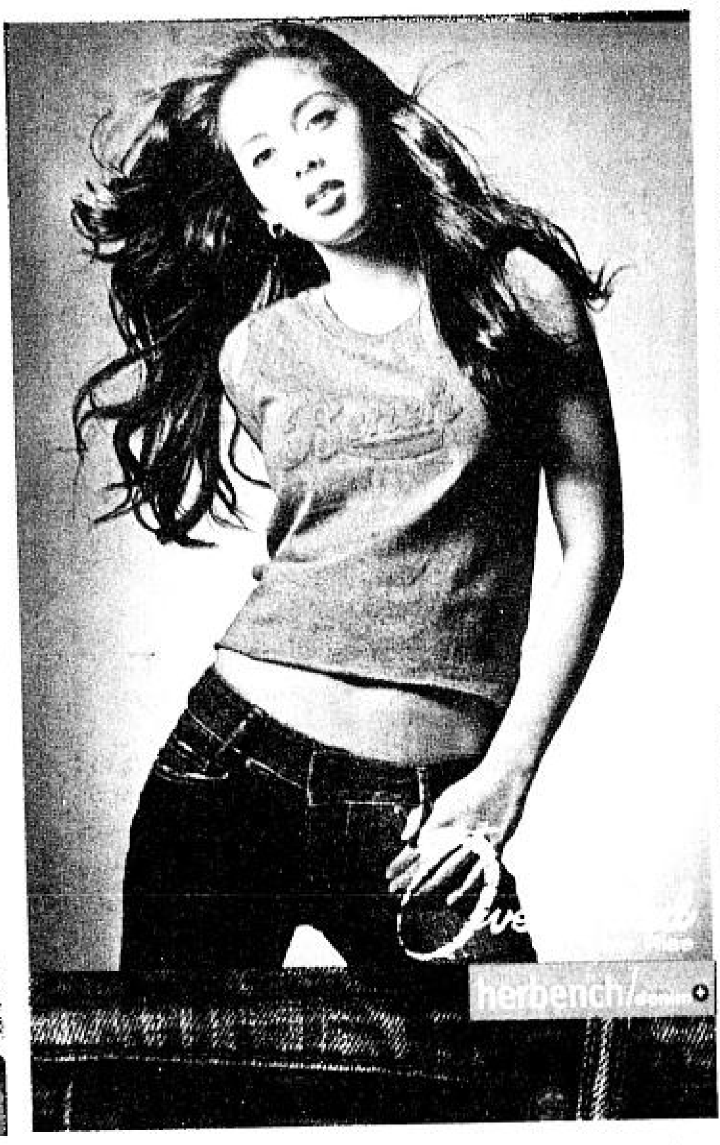

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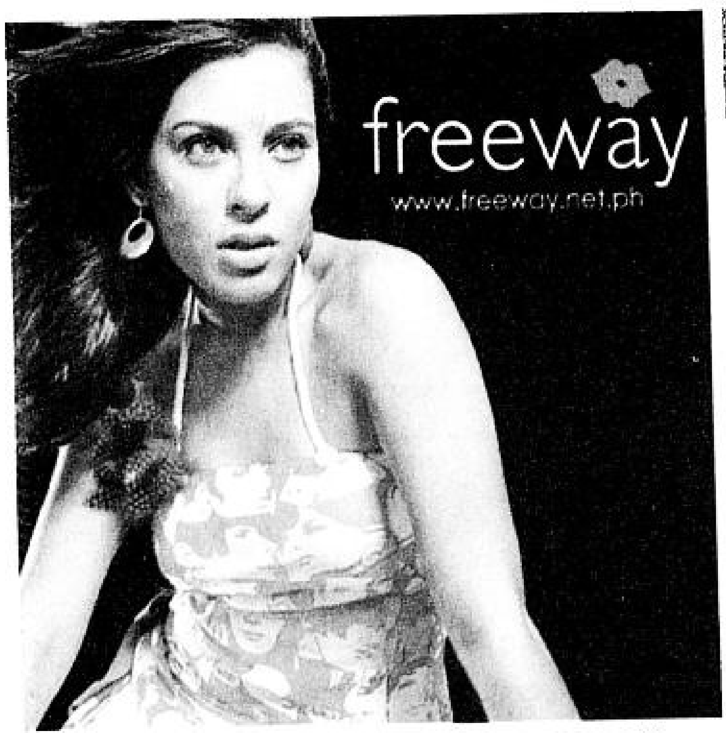
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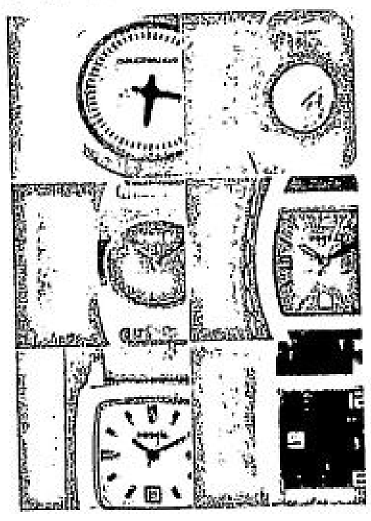

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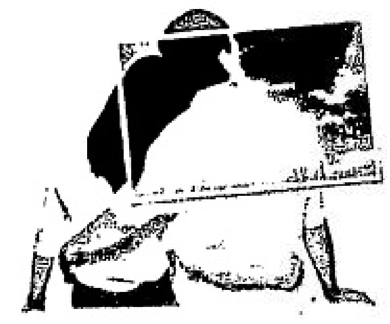

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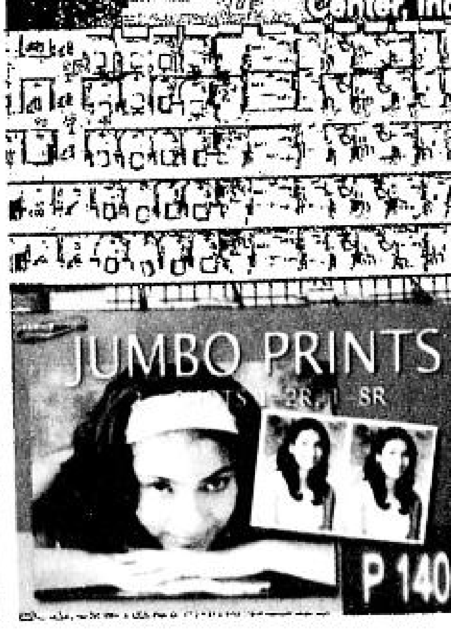
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P 140.00

SM SUPERMALLS

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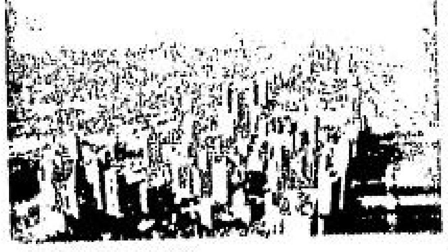

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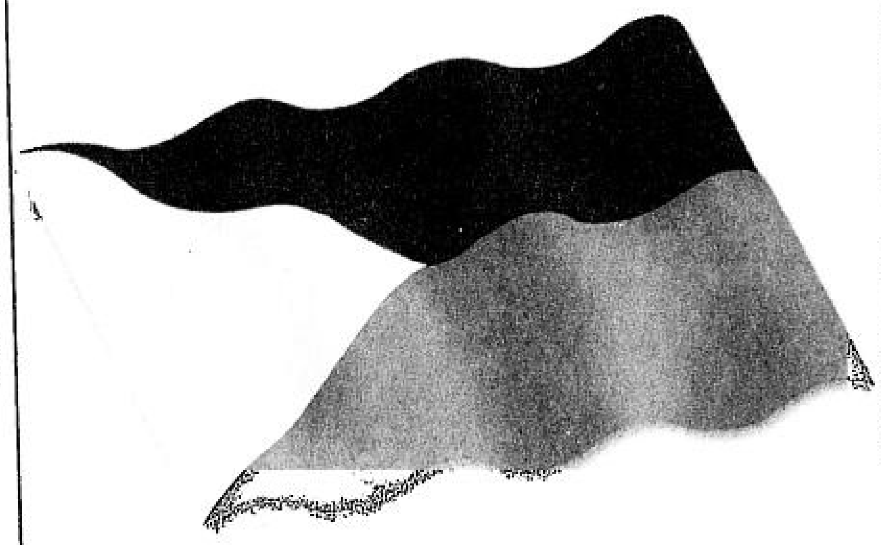


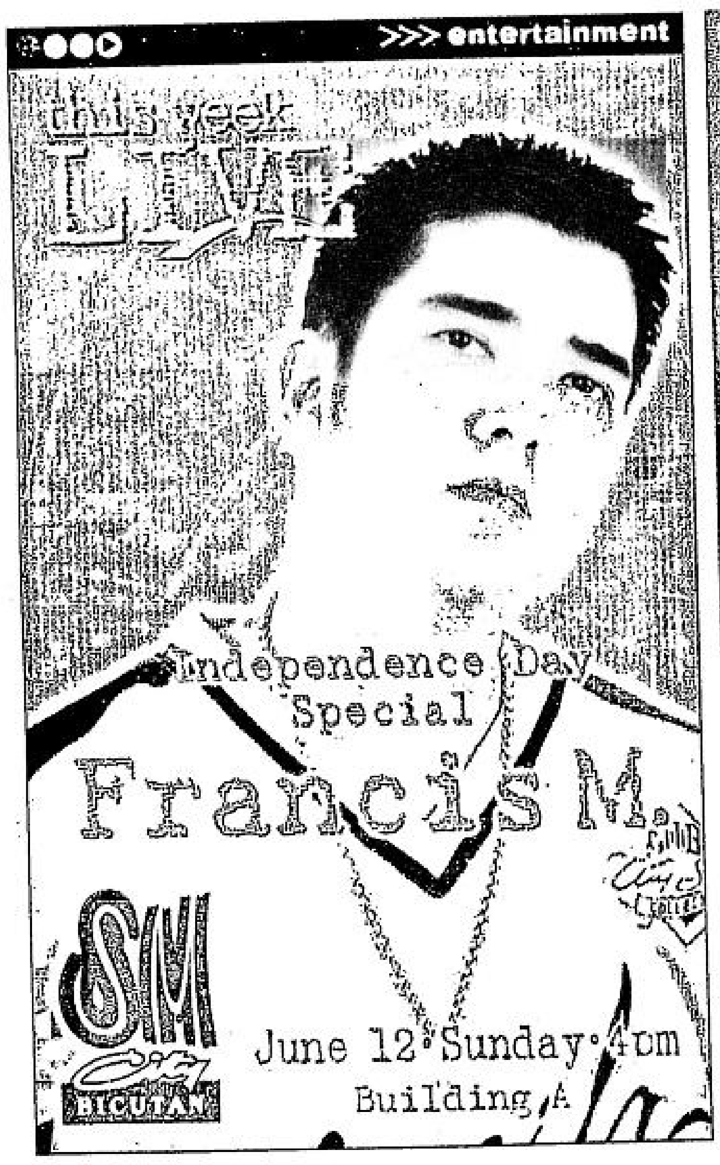
Come celebrate with us.

SM SUPERMALLS

Happy Independence Day
June 12, 2005

making great things possible
Globe

Freetime fun


>>> entertainment
this week LIVE
Independence Day Special
Francis M.
SM City BICUTAN
June 12 Sunday 4pm
Building A

enjoy non-stop grand slammin' action
GRANDSLAM SHOOTOUT
BATTLE OF THE CHAMPS
SUPERMALLS

CONFERENCE II

MECHANICS

- All daily players who are able to reach the minimum pre-determined game score, qualifies to join the Monthly Finals.
- All Monthly Finals winners will compete in the Grand Finals.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE
May to August 2005

Monthly Finals		Grand Finals
May 28, 2005	June 25, 2005	September 3, 2005
July 30, 2005	August 27,2005	

QUALIFYING GAME CATEGORIES
3-point Shootout • Stop & Shoot • Free Throw • 2-Ball Challenge

PRIZES

Monthly Finals:		Medal and P500 SM Gift check PBA premium items
Grand Finals:	champion:	Trophy and P3,000 SM Gift check PBA freebies
	1st runner-up:	P2,000 SM Gift check PBA freebies
	2nd runner-up:	P1,000 SM Gift check PBA freebies

Monthly Finals Showdown with the PBA Pros

CONFERENCE III:
September to December 2005
Grand Finals on January 7 2006

>>> entertainment
this week LIVE
Kalayaan Festival
7PM
Parking B
Bayang Barrios
June 10 • Friday
6Cyclemind
June 11 • Saturday
Mongols
June 12 • Sunday
SM City BACOOR

Cinderella

WILD SALE
up to 50% off
great choices

Sale runs until June 15, 2005

at participating SM Supermalls branches.

Per DTI-NCR permit # 2725 series of 2005

ITTI

THE 72 HOUR SALE

20% off School & nursing shoes
FREE Bookmark with every purchase
Promo runs weekends of
June 3 4 5
10 11 12
15 16 17
at participating SM Supermalls branches

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Tropical Hut

Get a
BACPAC for only P99
with every purchase of a
VALUE MEAL
Promo up to June 30, 2005
offer good
at all participating SM Supermalls branches

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Present this coupon and get a
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Valid from June 8-30,2005 at
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